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THE NEW CRITICISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE:
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CLEANTH BROOKS AND WILLIAM EMPSON

by

DUŠAN T. STOJANOVIĆ

ⓒ

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ABSTRACT

Approximately every ten years a new generation of scholars and critics challenges the "truth" about Anglo-American New Criticism. Both the theoretical and the historical aspects of the movement are examined from a new perspective, but re-evaluations usually do not go too far because of the critics' disregard for the natural discrepancies and contradictions between the New Critics' theory and practice, as well as in the writings of the previous interpretators. It seems to be a rather fruitless, and totally uninspiring task to establish the "real truth" about New Criticism, or to ask new questions about the discoveries of previous scholarship about the New Critics such as their contextualism (Krieger), Neo-Romanticism (Foster), Organicism (Wellek), Kantianism (Handy), closeness to Russian Formalism (Ewa Thompson), or more recently, the influence and the reflection of dogma and politics in the New Critics' writings (Graff). Many have already concluded that the New Critics represent a group of individuals who defy any standard and firm definition. They share a very similar literary taste, but have totally different ideas as to what their task is, and how it should be carried out. However, this simple truth has not made the scholars' job much easier. On the contrary, many have gone in the wrong direction, trying to reconcile the contradictions, or to find non-existent similarities. The paradoxical nature of the New Criticism does not require classification, it requires verification. Flooded with different interpretations, the traditional academic textbooks inherit too many of the legendary misconceptions and conclusions of the

past. For instance, the traditional definition of New Criticism is based on the following (sometimes twofold) concepts: critical monism and critical relativism; or critical subjectivism and the return to critical aestheticism and Neo-Kantianism; critical organicism or interpretative form of structuralism, and so on. However, all these concepts need reevaluation for two main reasons. First of all, in spite of many consciously formulated concepts such as literature as knowledge; the form is the meaning; the poetic structure exists as the parts and as the whole; the New Critical theory has been influenced by the New Critics' analytical concepts as well (i.e. by concepts such as metaphor, symbol, irony, paradox, types of ambiguity, etc.). This practically means that in the case of critical monism, for instance, we can say that it is indeed true that the New Criticism seeks to find and develop a unique method for interpreting literature, but to achieve this goal needs to establish a variety of definitions of poem and poetry, which will become a main reason for discrepancies and contradictions in their thought. Secondly, traditional criticism usually fails to fully recognize the real nature of New Criticism because of its overly serious and presumptuous treatment of everything that the New Critics have said about themselves and their theories. The uniqueness of the New Criticism lies in the fact that this was the only modern critical movement which tried to combine and reconcile the two opposing schools of criticism, the intrinsic or textual criticism with the extrinsic or interpretative criticism, using the two opposing philosophical theories: literature as an aesthetic and autonomous object, and literature as a supreme knowledge. In addition to this, somehow the scholars have forgotten that most New Critics were creative writers and poets. Thus, the New Critical understanding of an interpretation as provocation can have its legitimate value in spite of its basically non-academic motivations or conclusions.

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I. Introduction

During any initial stage of studying New Criticism, one question soon becomes predominant in the huge and vast area of the exploratory research: "What is the real cultural and ideational background of New Criticism?". Difficulties in defining the field of study equal those referring to the initial sources and influences; in addition are the attempts to define the major principles of the movement. This problem occurs mainly because of the controversial nature of the basic theories of New Critics.

Of the many influences on New Criticism, two are particularly important. One leads from the roots of French Symbolism, through the writings of T.E. Hulme, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, representing the Neo-Classical version of Bergsonian views. The other derives essentially from the Coleridgean and Arnoldian tradition, through I.A. Richards, W. Empson and American Pragmatism (Dewey in particular), but representing the Neo-Romantic version of Croce's Hegelo-Kantianism. Naturally, it is always possible to draw other pairs of significant opposites, such as Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, Sir Philip Sidney and Shelley in opposition to Wordsworth and Keats; Blake, E.A. Poe, and so on. However, the essential pair, the Neo-Classical vs. the Neo-Romantic, create the basis for all the controversies of the movement. At the same time, they are the main obstacle in the reconcilatory attempts of New Critics to break through and find other ways in their theoretical speculations. The New Critics have never succeeded in their efforts to overcome the major influence of T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards. T.S. Eliot and the Imagists place their antipathy towards science into the New Critical doctrine of literature as knowledge. Richards, openly admiring the Romantics, combines the Romantic theories with his concentration on language, referential meaning and psychology in order to emphasize the role of literature as a means of communication. Therefore, the second foundation of the New Critical doctrines, as opposed to the Eliotian line, deals with the classical dispute between the rational and irrational nature of literature, i.e., logic vs. emotions; intellect vs. feelings; mind vs. imagination. The reconcilatory factor between these two approaches is based on the New Critical principle that literature offers knowledge but, at the same time, the work of literature exists as an aesthetic, i.e., autonomous object. In spite of the contradictory character of this principle, to challenge it would mean to challenge everything important that the New Criticism stands for.

Defining the Area of Study

To date, academics and literary critics have failed to agree in defining what the major issues of the New Criticism are. Sharing the same taste and ideas, the New Critics usually take very distinct standpoints. This has been an issue in itself, and the scholars are unable to provide us with better than a "working definition" as to what are the major principles of the movement. The controversy usually starts with the attempt to classify the movement according to already well-known types of criticism. The whole movement has been described variously, and individually each New Critic has been classified in very unexpected ways: sometimes one is taken quite apart from the others.

The critics even disagree as to which ones should be legitimately included in the proper list of the members.[1] Many have tried, with more or less success, to prove even that the New Critics did not have anything in common, or that the movement actually never existed.[2] Despite this fact, the battles are not over yet, and the New Critics will probably continue for a long period of time to be called Arnoldians and Hegelians, Coleridgians or Richardsians, Neo-Kantians (Croceans or Bergsonians), and also Fugitives, New Metaphysicals, Pragmatists, Neo-Classicists or Romanticists, Formalists, quasi-intellectuals, literary conservatives and impressionists. Politically, they were classified according to their geographical and ideological roots as Southern Agrarians, Mid-Western liberals, and two of them even as Marxists. The range of the New Critics' interests and activities is extremely large. It starts with politics, economics, their social life, education, the publishing and writing of poetry, their editorship and influence in university and literary communities, and it ends with their literary theory, their close reading methods and interest in aesthetics.

Historically, the New Critics started as literary revolutionaries and political reactionaries. At the same time, they were educational reformists and rebels against the academic establishment, but also they were strong supporters of the movement of the Southern Agrarians. Their first literary contributions coincide with their political campaigns, and if they are praised as the founders and editors of a number of respectable literary reviews,[3] their reactionary activities in other reviews[4] aroused remarkable protest and animosity.[5] In spite of that, their persistent effort in introducing courses dealing with criticism and literary analysis at American universities, and the appearance of textbooks such as Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930), Understanding Poetry (1938) and The New Criticism (1941) resulted in the full and permanent recognition of the movement. This will remain a fact despite the same type of objections which appear at the very beginning and towards the end of the movement. The New Critics began and ended by being accused of sins such as "intellectual (or esoteric) elitism", "quasi-aestheticism", "crude and frankly reactionary formalism", "critical monism", "nebulous" and "faulty" terminology, "obscurantism", replacement of the genuine system or conceptual framework with the "rhetoric of speculation", "big words" or "intellectual punning".[6] Their exceptional productiveness, their intolerant and polemical tone, anti-historicism, and obscure and dogmatic analytical methods caused considerable damage to the movement. The negative aspect of their right-wing "radicalism", militant attitude towards anyone who did not share the same view about "ontological criticism", the "cognitive function of literature" or "organic unity", as well as their aggressiveness and their arrogant treatment of their opponents counterbalanced previously sympathetic and positive attitudes towards the New Critics. Theoretically, New Criticism came to its end when the New Critics started to ridicule the extrinsic approach to literature by introducing a long list of fallacies, and by "coining aphoristic generalities that were near caricatures".[7] However, for the most part, the New Critics were not directly responsible for the reasons why these attitudes and the movement changed so drastically, nor why the precepts of New Criticism became "vulgarized and its biases grew more conspicuous".[8] Because, before then, very often, and depending only on the determination of their supporters or opponents, the New Critics had been praised or criticized for almost identical reasons. As a matter of fact, at the very beginning, no one had even noticed any discrepancy or inconsistency in the New Critical teachings. In their programmatic texts the New Critics indeed made a pledge to fight against the Neo-Humanists, vulgar Marxists, moralistic and biographical criticism, as well as against psychologism, historical positivism and impressionism. But most of them probably never seriously intended to keep this promise permanently. Y. Winters openly admired I. Babbitt and P.E. More; Ransom and Tate said several times that they did not know "what is meant nowadays by a 'new' critic"; almost all New Critics read and used Freud, even accepting certain ideas from Richards' psychologism. Burke and Empson were openly Marxists. Burke even wrote in support of Van Wyck Brooks, etc. Of all the New Critics, only Burke was not a poet. The others, even R.P. Warren, who was also a famous novelist, considered themselves firstly as poets. Thus, their criticism is a criticism of poet-critics, more or less metaphorical and inconsistent as is to be expected.

This fact is usually overlooked, but as a matter of fact, none of the New Critics ever had any academic degree or professional training in criticism or in literature. Many of them were just good readers, self-educated, but with enormous gaps in their knowledge of literature, philosophy, linguistics and languages. Only their reputations as creative writers saved them from losing their academic positions as university professors. Ransom, for example, had only two other undergraduate courses which were not on Plato's or Aristotle's philosophy, and had never taken any course in the history of literature. Empson was a student of mathematics when he wrote Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930), etc. Only Burke had knowledge and experience as a literary critic but he was neither an academician, nor had he ever taught in a university.

Even at the very peak of their influence, at the time when they experienced the greatest success in their careers, particularly in teaching criticism and publishing poetry, no one expected the New Critics to offer a coherent and elaborate system of critical principles and tools. They were indeed accused of being hardliners, of introducing and propagating only one type of poetry, but apart from the critique of their taste and their "shortsighted and narrow approach to literature", nobody spoke about anything else.[9] The first serious theoretical remarks came from the new generation of scholars and literary theoreticians who had grown up at a time when the New Critics felt too powerful and secure to make any changes. Soon many things came under attack. Both their supporters and their better educated opponents were irritated by the New Critics' permanent carelessness in quotations, their uncorrected errors or even in deliberate distortions of the text. Academic studies pointed out their confused, obscure and home-made terminology; also their abstract and unclear definitions of literary concepts, or their contradictory and unconvincing presentation of arguments. What was once praised as quality now became shortcoming. The New Criticism at its very end was described as the tool of an "educational bureaucracy fathered by advanced industrial criticism", or as "the epitome of all that was constricting and deadening about the academic study of literature".[10] Surprisingly or not, the most severe attacks were directed against their interpretative methods. Finally, the very same New Critics who had previously been praised for their most ingenious analyses were now accused of trivializing literature by "turning interpretation into an over-intellectualized game whose object was to solve petty interpretative puzzles".[11]

II. Conceptual Framework:

Focus and Direction of the Approach to be Used

This short survey of the long list of controversial opinions about New Criticism was intended only to show over how large an area the New Critics fought their battles. Partially, these multiple choices and the constant interaction of contradictory premises are the main reason for the failure both of the New Critics to survive and of the scholars to find proper solutions for identifying the real issues of the movement. Equally, in theory as well as in practice, the New Critics show the same inability to decide between two opposing and excluding concepts: e.g., in theory, between the text-oriented and the reader-oriented criticisms; in practice, between objective close readings and tendencies to adjust the analytical methods according to personal theories and taste. As some critics have pointed out,[12] the troubles of the New Critics start with their attempt to answer fundamental questions such as, "What is the nature of literature?".

Instead of offering an answer, they constantly confuse it, or deliberately try to substitute for it by answering the question, "What is the function of literature?", or else by saying that "literature is not conceptual knowlege but experience" and that the "poem is not paraphrasable". They have difficulties in sounding convincing later, in their search for hidden meanings, and in their attempts to defend the aesthetic autonomy of literature. Their ambitions and expectations are too high when they try to solve the problem of relationship between literature and reality; but their speculations are insufficient when they do not make the necessary distinction between the definitions of the poem and of poetry. This shows not only that none of the discussions on New Criticism can be restricted to only one position, but also that the controversial nature of the movement in itself has to be a part of any serious study of New Criticism.

Therefore, the study of New Criticism creates a problem in choosing its adequate direction and focus within two possible conceptual frameworks; i.e., whether

(A) To put the initial emphasis on the conflicts occurring frequently between the New Critics' proposed theory and their analytical methods; as well as to stress the study of the contradictions occurring in the New Critical theorizing and analyzing; or

(B) To focus the study on the formulation of the major theoretical principles regardless of their possible interactions or controversial nature; and to avoid a direct confrontation of theory and practice, or any multiplicity of comparisons, cross-references and polemics.

A different subject-matter requires a different approach, but too many and frequent changes in the methodology neither simplify nor guarantee a proper solution. Obviously, in our case, each approach has its own potentially good and bad aspects in each specific situation. The first tends to stress the importance of studying problems in their final form: i.e., their interactions at the utmost (controversial) designations. The second serves its purpose best as a chronological review of the development of the major concepts. In spite of a natural exclusiveness between the two approaches, the complexity and controversial nature of New Criticism allows the possibility for their interaction under certain conditions. For example, historically, New Criticism can be seen as gradually shifting its focus back and forth on three basic sets of problems: those belonging to aesthetics, poetics and semantics. This means that if the study of a single aspect of the movement is to be conducted, approach "A" is as valid as approach "B". However, if the individual study of one particular New Critic is the focus, or if one wants to study a set of problems which belong to one of the three basic fields of interest, i.e., aesthetics, poetics or semantics; it is hard to believe that these two patterns could be completely adequate.

First of all, each New Critic has his own preferences and personal taste. Therefore, the discussion of Ransom's teachings would necessarily emphasize his major interests in aesthetics; the study of Brooks would stress his theory of organic poetry, while the writing on Empson would logically be more oriented towards his typology of ambiguity, etc. Secondly, serious problems also occur when one attempts to summarize or classify the results of individual studies in regard to their historical or conceptual interactions. In this case as well, no one approach, neither "A" nor "B", could serve one's purposes satisfactorily, because any comparison of the cross-references immediately multiplies the conduct of thousands of conceptual interrelationships; in the same way as any comparison of theory with practice would create thousands of new rhetorical ambiguities awaiting to foreshadow any attempt to study New Criticism in its totality.

In other words, the controversial nature of New Criticism creates two basic problems for literary critics. First, direct conflicts and interrelated contradictions prevent critics from finding the common features and principles of the movement; secondly, the study of the individual New Critics and the study of the movement itself are two separate issues and require two completely different approaches. In practice, this has been manifested as the predominance of one type of writing about New Criticism over the other. For instance, the powerlessness of the critics to isolate a single concept accepted by all the New Critics led most scholars either to study individual New Critics or to study particular problems regardless of their impact on the whole movement. Since the controversial nature of New Criticism coincides with its historical and ideational or conceptual aspects, the study of the movement in its totality has most often been set aside.

III. Concrete Problems:

The Subject Matter and Thesis Design

If for the moment we ignore the need to single out the common principles of the New Critics, offering instead an initial description of the subject matters which were of greater interest to the New

Critics, we should be able to combine the study of contradictions in theories and conflicts between the New Critical theory and its practice: i.e., approach "A", combined with the study of individual theoretical and analytical concepts, i.e., approach "B". For example, by selecting and contrasting the various groups of problems, it is possible to form four basic sets of problems that most interest the New Critics:

1) Problems related to language, its use and effectiveness: either as a difference between ordinary language and poetic language, or as a referential and emotional function of language;

2) Problems related to the general question of aesthetics and the function of literature: theory of knowledge, literature as communication, autonomy of literature, function of criticism, science versus literature;

3) Problems related to the practical analysis of poetry and to poetic devices: poetic meaning, metaphor, multiplicity of meaning, tensions, irony, symbolic action, etc.;

4) Problems related to the definitions of poetry and poetic structure: theory of impersonality, dualistic theory of poetic structure, Organicism, the poem as a set of statements, etc.

If these four sets of problems are combined with approaches "A" and "B" we should, as a direct result, have the first outline of the New Critics' concepts. In contrasting personal theories with the general achievements of the movement, the historical dimension naturally occupies the first plan; in emphasizing the connections and interactions between various problems, a background knowledge of the initial ideas will help us to understand the reasons for the development of certain theories. Therefore, this thesis is going to deal critically with the theoretical and analytical achievements of the three representatives of the three main branches of New Criticism:

1) John Crowe Ransom, the theoretician and leading "philosopher" of the movement, mostly interested in aesthetics and responsible for some crucial theories of the movement as well as for its contradictions;

2) Cleanth Brooks, the defender of the New Critics' major doctrines, more interested in analytical methods, but known also as the proponent of Organicism in the New Critical poetics;

3) William Empson, the practician and the most original figure of the movement, mostly interested in semantics, offering an explanation of his own analytical methods, very unusual for the time.

Furthermore, the theoretical concepts of these three critics will be also compared with appropriate examples of their poetic analysis in order to verify their potential usefulness and validity. This should, at the same time, provide some insight into the controversial nature of the movement and help to define its major principles.

CHAPTER ONE

JOHN CROWE RANSOM'S AESTHETIC, POETIC AND CRITICAL CONCEPTS

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JOHN CROWE RANSOM'S AESTHETIC, POETIC AND CRITICAL CONCEPTS

Introduction

John Crowe Ransom's writing in criticism may be described under three main headings: aesthetics, poetics and the function of criticism. Since he was already a well-known poet when he wrote his first essays, Ransom entered the field of criticism with already formed literary taste and poetic views which would later grow along with his own development as poet and as reader of the criticism of others. Therefore, his criticism is a more or less genuine reflection of his literary career, as well as being the result of other activities, such as his contribution in the Agrarian movement, his editorship at Fugitive (1922-1925) and the Kenyon Review (1939-1959), or his professorships at various universities and colleges. Accordingly, the first book and the first essays were heavily oriented politically, flooded with Agrarian theories and social philosophy which were to have a similar effect on his first literary articles as well.

However, in the period 1931-1932, Ransom wrote a long two-part essay, "A Poem Nearly Anonymous", which was published in the American Review (1933) and later included in The World's Body (1938) as two separate essays: the second part appeared as "Forms and Citizens".[1] This was a breaking point in Ransom's writing on criticism. If God Without Thunder (1930) and the first essay in aesthetics, "Flux and Blur in Contemporary Art" (1929),[2] were so significant for Ransom's first literary doctrine, i.e., of literature as knowledge, "A Poem

Nearly Anonymous" meant the same as Ransom's first major essay on poetics. Soon he followed it with his most important essays on the nature of poetry: "Poetry: A Note on Ontology" (1934), "Poets without Laurels", "The Cathartic Principle" and "The Mimetic Principle", all written in 1935 and included in The World's Body. In spite of the fact that Ransom was later to change his views, these first essays on poetics equal only "Criticism as Pure Speculation" (1941) and "Wanted: An Ontological Critic" (1941) for their historical significance. "A Poem Nearly Anonymous" deals with Eliot's and Keats' idea of the impersonality of the poet; but apparently Ransom's analysis of Milton's "Lycidas" comes to the forefront as one of his best interpretations of poetry. Let us look first at the theoretical aspect of the essay.[3]

I. RANSOM'S THEORY IN THE PERIOD 1930-1938

1) The Concept of Impersonalism

In the "Preface" for The World's Body,[4] Ransom describes the type of poetry that interests him as "the act of an adult mind", or "the act of a fallen mind". He goes on: "It has been forgotten by most of the formal aestheticians that poetry is an event in time. Under the present circumstances it is an inexcitable and perhaps spectacular event, which interrupts the history of men officially committed under civilization to their effective actions and abstract studies. It is revulsive, or revolutionary, by intention". (WB, pp. viii-ix) But this does not mean that the poet has a right to dissociate from reality and invent his own private world. "The poetry I am disparaging", says Ransom, "is a heart's-desire poetry . . . written by romantics. . . . It denies the real world by idealizing it: the act of a sick mind". And furthermore, he continues: "The true poetry has no great interest in improving or idealizing the world. . . . It only wants to realize the world, to see it better. Poetry is the kind of knowledge by which we must know what we have arranged that we shall not know otherwise". (WB, p. x) The world is made of "whole and indefeasible objects" and its solid substance, its "body", rests in the fullness of memory, out of which "we construct the fullness of poetry, which is counterpart to the world's fullness". In order to counteract the modern technological society and the practicality of science, the nowadays poetry must be modern, i.e., it has to enact the return and regeneration of its powers as the "fullness of the world". (WB, p. xi) These are briefly the main principles of Ransom's poetics expressed in The World's Body, some of them appearing for the first time in "A Poem Nearly Anonymous". However, the most important parts of the essay are quite different from most of the theories that Ransom was to develop later on. At the time when the essay was written, Ransom was still active in the Agrarian movement, and still impressed with T.S. Eliot's criticism. As Lee T. Lemon pointed out, Eliot had a double relationship to the theory of impersonality: "After early rebellion against any kind of mimetic standard, he has come to place progressively greater emphasis upon the personality of the poet and the meaning of the poem".[5] Eliot sees the poem as an expression of "a general truth" which somehow retains "all the particularity" of the poet's experience.[6] Ransom is more radical, and he insists on the "anonymity" of poetry; thus, he sees the poem as the result of restraint, rather than as a simple reflection of the poet's experience.[7] He agrees with Eliot's views on "general truth" and "particularity", but he believes that the role of the poet is in more than that. Like Shelley, Ransom believes in the enormous power of poetry, and for him poets are like prophets: they state eternal truth, not their own experience. Therefore, the first condition of poetry is anonymity:

> A good poem, even if it is signed with a full and well-known name, intends as a work of art to lose the identity of the author; that is, it means to represent him not actualized, like an eye-witness testifying in court and held strictly by zealous counsel to the point at issue, but freed from his juridical or prose self and taking an ideal or fictitious personality; otherwise his evidence amounts less to poetry. (WB, p. 2)

Secondly, as he finds it in Milton's *Lycidas*, art is the result of the author's rebellion against the conventions of tradition, and it reflects his desire to be modern. In Milton, this desire for modernity has been realized through the application of certain poetic devices, such as irregular stanzas, rhymeless lines, rough meter, etc. Ransom thinks that Milton did this deliberately, that the poem was written first in verse, and according to the traditional requirements, and that later on, the poet purposely changed it to achieve a new effect. However, Ransom also believes that these "defiances" show something else which he considers to be of the utmost importance. They are a proof of the poet's restraint from his inspiration, "showing the man unwilling to give way to the poet; they are not based upon special issues but upon surliness, and general principles". (WB, p. 11)

More accurately, Ransom describes this problem in "Forms and Citizens", (WB, pp. 29-54) introducing the concept of "aesthetic distance". In "Forms and Citizens", Ransom leaves Milton's analysis aside for a while in order to discuss the relationships between the poet (or poetry) and society. The earlier thoughts from God Without Thunder are present again: forms and ceremonies (or rituals and manners) are pure artistry. Poetry is one of the aesthetic forms that society tries to hand down because, unlike the economic forms, these do not "serve the principle of utility". (WB, p. 29) In other words, they are "play-forms", not "work-forms"; and modern society, according to Ransom, favors the economic forms in the same way as primitive society does: as "the recipes of maximum efficiency, short routes to 'success', to welfare, to the attainment of natural satisfaction and comfort". (WB, p. 30) Before industrialization and high technological development, there was a more civilized society in which the aesthetic forms were as important as the economic forms. In modern society, the citizens have forgotten how to employ the "techniques of restraint" which stand "between the individual and his natural object" in order to impose "a check of his action" (WB, p. 31) According to Ransom, modern society is, in a certain way, a step backwards, because it imposes "empty" forms and ceremonies: those which are the result of science and high technology, and offer only more pleasures without contemplation. Furthermore, Ransom concludes, science favors the same animalistic instincts of the natural man by emphasizing his economic desire to possess, as the sophisticated technology is aimed at just more efficient economic possession, and at the better service of the natural animal for more pleasures.

"The only solution that is possible, since the economic solution is not possible", says Ransom, "is the aesthetic one". (WB, p. 43) Only a society which has well-established forms, rituals, and ceremonies might stand against the animalistic desires of its citizens, in order to make possible a higher rank of aesthetic pleasure which must be accompanied with contemplation, not only with a desire to possess. The implication of Ransom's idea of the civilized man seen as artist is that culture and economics are always going to be at opposite poles. The main function of art is to "frustrate the natural man and induce the aesthetic one". (WB, p. 39) Like manners or ritual, art imposes an aesthetic distance between individual and object. In other words, all of them rest on formalism.

For instance, manners require that a gentleman approach the woman with "ceremony, and pay her a fastidious courtship". This artificial, formalistic approach would repress the covetous desires of the natural man, and under restraint, the woman would be contemplated as "a person and an aesthetic object; therefore a richer object". Similarly, in the case of the religious ceremony such as the funeral, through ritual and form, religion forces the individual to contemplate his loss and grief during the ceremony by giving him the "grateful sense that his community supports him in a dreadful hour". In the same way, art proposes its own form unlike science, which studies objects in order to have full control over them. Thus, according to Ransom, the caveman and the economic man behave exactly the same: they use scientific knowlege only to obtain one ultimate objective, to possess something. Art proposes to contemplate the object, but neither for immediate nor future possession. This feature Ransom calls the "aesthetic distance", and he considers it to be the main objective of difference between art and science, or between science and other "forms". Unlike science, art "wants us to enjoy life, to taste and reflect as we drink", rather than "to gulp it down". Like the technique of fine manners, or of ritual, a technique of art must be unprepossessing, because "heroic intentions call for heroic measures". (WB, pp. 39-40) Thus, aesthetic pleasure, artistic contemplation, and "civilization" (in the European sense, Ransom emphasizes) have the same foundation as the three social institutions, i.e., art, manners and religion: "A natural affiliation binds together the gentleman, the religious man, and the artist - punctilious characters, all of them, in their formalism". (Ibid.) Furthermore, we discover that Ransom refers here to Eliot's famous phrase: "In politics, royalism; in religion, Anglo-Catholic; in literature, classical", comparing it with a slogan of his own: "In manners, aristocratic; in religion, ritualistic; in art, traditional". (WB, pp. 41-42)

At this point, we might want to ask a few questions. First of all, how one should relate all these to Ransom's previous discussion of Milton; and secondly, why was it so important for Ransom to introduce the concept of aesthetic distance in his theory of forms and artistry? Obviously, the contrast between religious and aesthetic knowledge on one side, and scientific and economic knowledge on the other side, is only a part of Ransom's early theories of literature as knowledge. However, here we come to the most interesting part of Ransom's explanation: "The object of a proper society is to instruct its members how to transform instinctive experience into aesthetic experience". (WB,

p. 42) In other words, in order to humanize the natural man, society has *to complicate his natural functions with sensibility, and make them aesthetic*. Ransom insists several times on the tension or struggle between the *animalistic nature* of the *natural man*, and on the ability to restrain the emotions through the aesthetic distance of the *civilized man*. This basically Cartesian idea of *body* and *mind* as the opposition of the *instinctive* or sensual as opposed to the *mental* or logical is a repetitive motif in Ransom's writing, but here it appears for the first time in connection with T.S. Eliot's theory of the dissociation of sensibility in order to become a pretext for Ransom's dualistic theory of poetry, based mainly on the same principles of opposition between emotions and intellect, feelings and logic. In *The World's Body*, Ransom still does not speak about dualistic poetic structure in the same sense as he would later do in *The New Criticism*, but he speaks about form as *body* which would capture the poet's passion: "If the passion burns too hot in the poet to endure the damping of the form, he might be advised that poetry can exercise no undue compulsion upon his spirit since, after all, there is prose". (*WB*, p. 40)

Coming back to our initial question about the importance with which the essay "Forms and Citizens" is treated in connection with the analysis of Milton in "A Poem Nearly Anonymous", one can say that Ransom needed to write "Forms and Citizens" in order to expand and theoretically verify the arguments introduced in "A Poem Nearly Anonymous". For example, when Ransom says that Milton behaves like a modern poet, he wants to say that Milton violated the forms within the poem in order to call attention to himself as artist.[8] Like the modern poet, fearful of monotony, Milton violated the monologue convention of the poem, or its elegiac form in order to assert his own individuality. "*Lycidas*, for the most part a work of great art, is sometimes artful and tricky", says Ransom (*WB*, p. 28). The reason that Milton sometimes fails is directly related to the fact that he violates the artistic illusion and makes his readers "disturbingly conscious of man behind the artist". On the other hand, he is at his best when he is able to establish the *aesthetic distance* between himself and the object of the poem, i.e., the death of Edward King, a talented young fellow-student. Ransom needs to introduce the idea of anonymity, which he borrowed from Keats' theory of impersonalism and from T.S. Eliot's teaching about dissociation of sensibility, in order to combine it with his own theories about the natural man, the economic man and the civilized man which are a reflection of the ideas of Agrarianism, the movement in which Ransom was so much involved at the time. The idea of anonymity was already known and popular among the Fugitives and the Agrarians. There was even an agreement and common practice that editorship and all contributions in poetry, as well as the articles related to Agrarianism, should not be signed individually, but collectively. This was not only a protective measure; the Fugitives honestly believed that poetry should not have authorship because of its universality: all great poetry belongs to everyone, not to one person, even one author. Agrarianism propagated the idea of a common spirit which was shared by the people living on the same soil and under the same agrarian conditions, a regionalism against anything new or imported from other places; this common spirit of the community creates the culture, folklore, poetry and the "civilized" man. In 1931, Ransom lived abroad, in England and France, and at that time he read much of E.A. Poe, Baudelaire, the French Symbolists, the Imagists, Pound, Hulme and T.S. Eliot. The idea of aesthetic distance is the result of these readings; it being particularly important for Ransom, it fits perfectly with his already accepted idea of anonymity and Eliot's idea of the sensibility of great poets. But, in spite of that, on the other hand, Ransom's idea of anonymity is closer to Flaubert's concept of the impersonality of the writer, or to Keats' and Poe's concepts of dissociation from personal experiences through the fulfillment of the formal requirements of the poem. Similarly, the concept of aesthetic distance serves more purposes than being a part of just one theory. In addition to being able to connect the idea of aesthetic distance with Agrarianism and the concept of anonymity, Ransom was to use it to establish the main principles of two other theories: the autotelic function of poetry and the ontological status of criticism. Regardless of the fact that Ransom would later abandon the theory of impersonalism by attacking Eliot's theory of dissociation of sensibility in The New Criticism, the concept of aesthetic distance would stay as one of the most significant innovations in Ransom's theory. In addition to its role in the theories mentioned above, this concept has also traced the path for one of the most important teachings in the New Criticism: the postulate of literature being treated as an aesthetic object. Partially, bits and pieces of Ransom's early theory of impersonalism can be recognized also in his theory of the dualistic nature of the poetic structure, as well as in the theory of literature as knowledge.

2) The Autotelic Function of Literature: The Poem as an Aesthetic Object; the Concept of "Ontological": The "Stuff" of Poetry as Realization of its Ontology

In The World's Body, Ransom had already introduced most of his major theoretical concepts: aesthetic experience, aesthetic distance, the poem as an aesthetic entity, etc. However, in the second phase of his critical writing, i.e., in the period between the late 1930's and early 1940's, his theories became more elaborate and mature, so that finally in The New Criticism (1941), they show their definitive form. New concepts become predominant, but some of the earlier ideas were expanded and became a part of a new milieu. For instance, at this time, Ransom wrote a series of his most important essays on the function of criticism[10] in which he expanded his initial idea of the autotelism of literature by combining the Kantian concept of art as an autonomous aesthetic object with the Hegelian concept of Ontology. This meant a new breaking point in Ransom's writing of criticism, because, for the first time, he was able to offer a more flexible theory that all New Critics would agree upon. Naturally, within the framework of their own understanding of the autonomous value of literature, all New Critics draw their own conclusions about the limits of Ransom's theory. For example, Winters, Burke and Empson were always very sceptical about Ransom's Kantianism, opposing the idea of the strict autonomy of literature because of the fear that it could lead towards the isolation of literature from other forms of human activities.[11] However, Ransom's concept of the "ontological critic" was, in turn, generally better received and more propagated by all New

Critics than any other theory, excluding maybe only Empson's types of ambiguity.

The notions of "ontology", "ontological" or even the tautological expression "ontological being" are Ransom's most favored theoretical concepts. They appeared for the first time in "Poetry: A Note on Ontology" (1934), to signify different kinds of realities and different types of subject-matter in poetry. However, according to the development of his basic theory of poetic structure, Ransom uses these terms in a much broader sense later on. For example, in "Criticism, Inc." (1937) and in "Criticism as Pure Speculation" (1940-1941), Ransom's dualistic theory explains the total poetic structure as fusion of "paraphrasable core": i.e., "logical structure" in The New Criticism, or "prose argument" in "The Inorganic Muses"; "tissue of irrelevances", i.e., "local texture" in The New Criticism, or "unstructured detail" in "The Inorganic Muses".[12] Accordingly, the metaphysical sense of the term "ontological" varies from a pure description of the relationship of the two poles in Ransom's poetic theory (i.e., structure and texture) to the loose distinctions between prose and poetry based on differences between their use of ideas, things and images as manifestations of truth, i.e., everything based on a gnoseological principle. In other words, since the poetic peculiarities (or differentia specifica of poetry) are reflected in the irrelevant tissues, which Ransom also calls "ontological" materials of poetry, the poetic meaning (or texture-meaning) cannot be adequately isolated from its ontological entity, because it falls "outside the possible range of science" which is factual and paraphrasable.[13]

Consequently, Ransom believes that imagination has a function parallel to that of sight: the poet contemplates the particularity of the aesthetic object, dealing with its images which he considers to be truthful to the subject-matter, rather than to the object itself. Therefore, here lies the main difference between science and poetry, or between modern poetry and metaphysical poetry. Modern man is more interested in things, i.e., objects, than in ideas; thus he needs to be lured far away from the facts of science. In other words, when he feels unsatisfied with the generalizations of science, he should turn to art. Because the only genuine pleasure and truth is in the arts, i.e., in the contemplated images of the real; Ransom would say in "familiar" or "precious" objects. This creative process Ransom calls the "concretization of the universals", or the "universalization of the particulars". The task of the ontological critic is in doing the whole process in reverse. "The critic should find a poetic or individual object which tends to be univeralized", says Ransom. "His identification of the poetic object is in terms of the universal or commonplace object to which it tends, and of the tissue, or totality or connotation, which holds it secure". (WB, pp. 41-42) In other words, Ransom explains the dualistic nature of the poem also as manifested through its "prose object" (i.e., subject matter) which defines the character of the poet, and its "poetic object" (i.e., tissue of irrelevances) which defines the character of the poem. (WB, p. 42) The critic decides which part he wants to analyze, but the ontological critic would dissect the "tissue of irrelevances" regardless of the fact that its meaning cannot be isolated or fully comprehended.

As one might conclude, Ransom's theory of the ontological critic attempts to typologize criticism as a philosophical speculation, rather than to practice the real interpretative methods.[14] There are indeed some normative principles in the theory which are manifested in the request that literature should be treated primarily as literary phenomenon, i.e., literature qua literature, instead of being something else: religion, morals, psychology, etc. But these aesthetic concepts, the autotelic function of poetry, aesthetic distance, aesthetic object, can hardly compete with their gnoseological and metaphysical opposites: i.e., the concepts of literature as knowledge or aesthetic experience, the ontological being or the concrete universal, which dominate in this doctrine as its final cause. This is the main reason why the term "ontological criticism" is actually quite tautological and misleading. For instance, Ransom categorically claims that the difference between prose (or science) and poetry is based on the difference between the two poles of the total poetic structure: i.e., logical structure and local texture. However, at the same time, he claims a few other things: that the poetic object of the poem is not paraphrasable; that its meaning, i.e., texture-meaning, is not fully comprehendable and possible to isolate, but that the ontological being of the poem is in its texture, and, thus, the "ontological" critic should study the texture instead of the structure, because he should not look for meanings, but for "the living integrity of the poem". The first question which comes to mind is how this "living integrity" and the reader's inability to find the meaning of the poetic object, i.e., the meaning of all those symbols, metaphors and images, would contribute to form an "aesthetic experience" or a higher, superior rank of knowledge.

Ransom avoids offering an answer to that question, but he offers several explanations as to how the poem operates. One of the most famous examples is his analogy of the poem with a Christmas cake, or with a house. This metaphorical comparison appears in Ransom's first discussion of three kinds of criticism (moralistic, traditionalistic and psychologistic) as opposed to the ontological type of criticism.[15] In discussing the intent of the real (aesthetic) type of literary critic, Ransom points out that his first concern is to define the poem "with respect to its structure and its texture". The poem is not a "mere moment in time, nor a mere point in space". It is rather sizable like a house. It has its plan and logic, "a central frame" and "a huge wealth of local detail". Sometimes the details fit the plan perfectly and functionally, sometimes they do not, but "in either case the house stood up". ("CPS", p. 239) This logical substance of the poem is called "logical structure" or "prose core", and it is paraphrasable; and the local detail is called "local texture" or "tissue of irrelevances" and it cannot be paraphrased. To distinguish further "macroscopically and microscopically" the construction of the poem, Ransom introduces a few examples to emphasize the structural and functional interaction of the elements:

First of all, the relationship between the poet and the poem is described as a "sort of epicure" looking at a nice "Christmas pudding, stuffed with what dainties it will hold". ("CPS", p. 240) The pastry or cake itself is not so important as is the "stuffing" which gives the definitive flavor and specific taste to the cake. If we exchange the pudding for a house, the quality or value of the house would immediately include the value of its furnishings. This means, according to Ransom, that "the values of the poem would be intrinsic, or immediate, and they would include not only the value of the structure, but also the incidental value to be found in the texture". (Ibid.) This combination of two kinds of values, those of structure which Ransom also calls the main value (the cake or the house itself), and those of texture, which he calls the incidental values (i.e., the values of "stuffing" or "furnishings") is actually the main characteristic of poetry; "for prose has but a single value, being about one thing only, its parts have no values of their own, but only instrumental values". (Ibid.) In other words, according to Ransom, prose (which means science here) is "one-valued" because it refers to the particular, and the poem (which means poetry actually) is "many-valued" because it refers to both the particular and the universal. How does this operate? Through the duality of structure in each discourse, explains Ransom. For instance, in musical discourse, "we grasp the effects of both kinds of values from both structure [referring to the particulars] and text [referring to the universals]". As we grow in our musical understanding, "the structures become always more elaborate and sustained, and the texture which interrupts them and imperils them becomes more bold and unpredictable". ("CPS", p. 241)

Paradoxically enough, it seems that Ransom is speaking here about the difference between prose and poetry based on the degree of our awareness of the medium and its instruments being used in the process of presentation (or reception). In other words, in music as in the other arts, our feelings respond to the particular piece of art as a structural composition rather than a set of tones, words, and so on; i.e., this is possible because we are not usually aware that in music we deal with tones and accords, as in poetry we are not aware that we deal with words and so on. Or, once more to use Ransom's terminology, in the areas the ontological being is hidden in their texture which "contains many precious objects and aggregates a greater value than the structure". ("CPS", p. 241) However, regardless of the differences in "their respective world-views or ontological bases", it is not clear how, in Ransom's comparison of music with mathematics, music happens to be "better informed about the nature of the world and more realistic and less naive than mathematics." ("CPS", p. 241)

Ransom indeed suggests that there are "perhaps" other kinds of ontological differences between science and art based on "ontological vocation", "ontological temperaments", ("CPS", p. 241) and so on; but this does not seem to be a sufficiently satisfactory counterbalance to cover up the obvious conflict in his theory. His gnoseological demands of poetry directly oppose his demands for ontological criticism and for the autotelic status of poetry. This problem is reflected also in Ransom's definition of poetic discourse as well as in his explanation of the dualistic nature of poetic structure. Therefore, Ransom's theoretical dualism exists as a permanent contradictio in adjecto, tautologically raising the same point back and forth without any real solution.

II. RANSOM'S THEORY OF POETIC STRUCTURE

One of the most important teachings in Ransom's criticism is his theory of the dualistic nature of the poetic structure. In opposition to Brooks and other New Critics, Ransom insists on the non-organic unity of the poem. Accordingly, a literary work of art consists of first, a logical structure (i.e., paraphrasable idea or theme), and then of a local texture (i.e., a free flow of metaphors, images, symbols and other poetic and nonpoetic elements).[16] Therefore, Ransom's theory of the dualistic nature of poetic structure (as a whole) can be explained in terms of his opposition to T.S. Eliot's teachings about emotions and feelings, and Richards' theory of emotive language.

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN POETRY

1) Arguments Against Eliot's Points of View

In "Criticism as Pure Speculation" Ransom made for the first time some critical remarks against T.S. Eliot's favoring feelings. His objections are based on two arguments. First of all, Ransom opposes T.S. Eliot's viewpoints that poets have "to feel their thought" and search for a special kind of "experience" in which feeling cannot be distinguished from thinking. ("CPS", p. 229) Then, apart from his earlier views, expressed in his theory of the impersonality of the poet, Ransom is now against Eliot's theories, in particular his separation of emotions from feelings.

Ransom agrees that in every experience there is an impact of feelings; even, he says: "No discourse can sustain itself without interest, which is feeling". But, he continues, all critics are "bluffing" when they refer to the "tone", "quality" or "value" of the feeling analyzed in the poem, as is T.S. Eliot when he regards the poem as the "structure of emotion and feeling". ("CPS", pp. 230-231) According to Ransom, it is wrong to assume either that there is any quality of feeling separate from the quality of the poem, or that many feelings are combined in one emotion. Because, says Ransom, there is no single central "logic" or "paraphrasable core" in the poem to which an appropriate interest is attached.

In The New Criticism (1941), Ransom expresses similar reservations about Eliot's teaching on emotions and feelings, but he slightly changes his explanation about the role of emotions and feelings within the poetic structure. Now Ransom was to say that poetry indeed starts with emotions and feelings, but only in order to "find and explore the appropriate objects", so that they can be objectified and disappear.[17] Since in Ransom's interpretation "logical structure" is the only part of the poem that can be paraphrasable, emotions belong to logical structure, jointly with theme, meter, rhyme, rhythm, etc. On the other hand, in addition to metaphors, images, symbols, etc., feelings are a part of "local texture". However, the new element in Ransom's theory now is his changed attitude towards the status of thoughts in the poem. It is equally improper to favor thoughts instead of feelings, says Ransom in his critique of Yvor Winters' critical approach. (NC, pp. 211-279) Being impressed by French Symbolism, Winters quotes Mallarme's statement that words have a "rational meaning, and a fringe of feeling". According to Winters, this "fringe of feeling" is the most peculiar element of the poem, and even more, it represents the most wanting element in prose too. There are two reasons for this: first, the "fringe of feeling" constitutes a vivid texture; and secondly, it is inseparable from this rational content. Misled also by Winters' special usage of the terms "moral" and "morality", Ransom criticizes Winters' favoring of thoughts and logic as a "moral evaluation" of poetry, calling it a misunderstanding of the role of interpretation.[18]

2) Arguments Against Richards' Affective Theory: Poetic Meaning

Ransom's arguments against Richards are more complex and elaborated. They are based not only on the function of emotions and feelings in the poem, nor only on the separation of feelings and thoughts, but also they are a part of Ransom's other teachings such as those related to poetic meaning, language and the role of literature. First of all, Ransom claims that one of the most important peculiarities of poetry is the metaphysical nature of poetic meaning. The beauty of the poetic text is in its unparaphrasability. According to Ransom, there are two kinds of meaning related to the poetic text: first, the meaning of the logical structure, which represents the prose argument of the poem and makes its framework (this is equivalent to scientific meaning and factual truth); and secondly, the meaning of the local texture, which is irrelevant either for the understanding of the poetic structure, or for the analysis of the poem. Unlike the logical structure-meaning, which is not only paraphrasable but can be isolated from other parts of the poetic discourse, the texture-meaning is always incoherent and heterogeneous, and it cannot be isolated or even comprehended as an ontological entity.

Speaking specifically about Richards, Ransom is against Richards' inclusion of "feelings" in the concept of the four meanings reflected in metaphor.[19] Ransom's understanding of the concept of metaphor is based on his understanding of the two functions of language and on his critique of Richards' theory of language (otherwise referred to as the Affective Theory or as the theory of emotivism). Therefore, there is a certain congruency in both Ransom's teachings on metaphor and his critique of Richards' viewpoints on metaphor and emotive language, in spite of the fact that, according to him, they are two separate issues. The one is related to the poetic meaning, the other related to cognition and the role of literature.

First of all, Ransom believes that poetic devices such as metaphor, images, symbols, even meter or rhythm, do not serve to contribute to the semantic or psychological impacts of the poetic discourse, as Richards suggests. On the contrary, says Ransom, the effect of employing poetic devices is not restricted only to one single purpose. For instance, the effect of meter is rather to serve as part of many other effects and can be described also as plain and objective (or cognitive) effect entering into the total cognitive effect. (NC, p. 30. See also pp. 27-28, and 77.) Therefore, the function of metaphor is also to be unexpected: to dominate the logic or to diffuse the interest of the reader as a sort of meta-poem, or inner (second) form within the poetic discourse. Similarly Ransom speaks about creative imagination,[20] which he understands as a part of poetic strategy adding ambiguity to the poetic discourse (cf. his comments about pure and impure poetry). However, since the textual peculiarity of the poem is reflected only throughout the properties of the local texture (which overwhelms all properties of the logical structure), the critics whose main concern is morality, religion, psychology or logic are actually incompetent, because dealing with these properties of the text means dealing with the properties of the prose (i.e., with the logical structure which is the only paraphrasable part of the poem).[21]

Thus, when Ransom says: "Probably the most stubborn popular error which aestheticians are agreed upon in fighting is the notion that the work of art deals immediately with passions, instead of mediately"; (NC, pp. 16-17) he argues with Richards' statement that art is based on emotions and science on thoughts. On the contrary, claims Ransom, "art is among the highly reflective or cognitive activities" in which emotions have functions only to be the "correlative of the cognitive objects". Consequently, difference between science and poetry should not be based on differences between thoughts and emotions, but on the fundamental differences between poetic (logical) structure and (local) texture.

However, Ransom gives full credit to Richards' discussion of metaphor in terms of "tenor" and "vehicle", although he believes the terms should have the reverse roles. The "tenor" should serve as a "theme" of the poem, and the poet's mind is the actual "vehicle". Even with this correction, says Ransom, we did not exhaust all the complexity of the role which metaphor plays in the poetic structure, and Richards' explanations are too simplistic and insufficient to cover even the major faculties. According to Ransom, Richards' discussion of metaphor is particularly unsatisfactory in dealing with two questions: first, why metaphor should be the "omnipresent principle" of poetry; and then, why "feelings" (besides sense, tone and intention) should be included in the list of the four important meanings of metaphor. Ransom disagrees with Richards and some New Critics (Brooks, R.P. Warren, Empson) that metaphor should be treated as the major poetic device if it is not a "differentia specifica" that belongs only to the poetic discourse. If someone claims that metaphorical speech is the main characteristic of language in general, it is hard to accept that it should be the main characteristic of poetic discourse too. Ransom believes that the main task of poetry is cognition, not communication. Therefore, he criticizes Richards' inclusion of "feelings" with the argument that "feelings" convey certain "information" (i.e., emotions instead of experience) in order to serve as a means of communication. (NC, pp. 67-73, 76-79, and 84-85.)

Eliot's ideas are much closer to Ransom's in spite of his rejection of Eliot's theory of the sensibility of the great poets, as well as Eliot's favoring feelings above thoughts. In his critique of Richards, Ransom accepts Eliot's attitude that sentimental responses to the poem do not warrant the explanation of what the poems are indeed. On the other hand, he is also critical of Winters' favoring thoughts and logic, despite the fact that he said a lot of appreciative things about Winters' analytical methods.[22] Nevertheless, Ransom's criticism of Eliot and Winters is never so strict and disprovable in comparison to his criticism of Richards; because, despite some differences and disagreements, Ransom shares Eliot's literary taste and Winters' admiration for logic. Therefore, it is quite understandable why Ransom even confronts Eliot's theories with those of Richards:

> Probably the most important thing in Eliot's statement [about the creative act] is his recognition of big emotions as set off against little feelings. (NC, pp. 155-156)

Unlike Eliot, according to Ransom, Richards is unable to seize the fusion of feelings, phrases and images into one compound of poetic discourse. Richards' explanation that emotions belong to poetry and cognitions to science seems to irritate Ransom constantly. He responded differently, but finally he offered one counter-argument which corresponded to his theory of the dualistic nature of poetic structure: emotions are attached to the logical structure, and feelings to the local texture. It is obvious that Ransom was never too happy with this explanation, because in The New Criticism alone there are more than twelve different definitions of the poem.[23] However, posing the questions "what is the purpose" and "what is the nature" of literature, Ransom immediately has to accept the Richardsian comparison between different roles for poetry and science. Since this conflict between poetry and science is based on their relationship with experience and cognition, the discussion of poetic structure leads Ransom quite naturally back towards his theory of literature as knowledge.

III. RANSOM'S DOCTRINE OF LITERATURE AS KNOWLEDGE:

Development and Historical Background

Ransom's doctrine of poetry as knowledge represents the earliest theory of New Criticism. Already in February of 1914, Ransom outlined in a letter to his father a "theory of poetics" which would be based on the unique means of poetry to express an "ontologically distinct" type of knowledge.[24] This very theory, elaborated and expanded, would continue to be in the focus of Ransom's attention throughout his whole literary career for the next half century. Started firstly as the claim that human experience cannot be fully realized or comprehended without art, later on this doctrine was to encompass also the main principles of Ransom's theory of language, his definition of the poem, as well as his antagonistic position towards science and the critique of Richards' psychologism.

During his campaign for Agrarianism and activities in the Fugitive group, in the late 1920's and the early 1930's, Ransom had already outlined his understanding of art in regard to science and progress. God Without Thunder (1930), the first published book, was a natural result of these political views. Like religion, at the time, Ransom defines art firstly as a right attitude towards nature and reality in opposition to science as man's effort to dominate his environment.[25] This neo-romantic definition of art of a Southern conservative was later reformulated twice. Once, at the time when the major essays of The World's Body (1938) were published (from 1933 to 1937), and the second time, when its final version appeared in The New

Criticism (1941). Thus, Ransom's second definition of art as the fusion of religion and ritual, which would become the ultimate choice and replacement for science, is reformulated for the third time as that of art being "total experience" versus the "partial knowledge" of science. This gradual development and the changes in Ransom's definitions are caused by the complexity of the new aspects that Ransom introduced each time. The early outline still persisted in the second formulation of the doctrine, but the final shape of the theory was complete when the concepts of "experience" and "cognition by images" were introduced to counteract the arguments of Richards and his Affective Theory. In other words, to summarize, we can say the Ransom's doctrine of literature as knowledge went through the following phases:

1) Early period - poetry as a special type of knowledge;

2) God Without Thunder - the first definition based on the difference between poetry and science: art is a right attitude towards reality; the second definition offers art as an alternative to science;

3) The World's Body definitions based either on the differences between feelings and emotions, or between knowledge of science versus knowledge offered by poetry: still art is seen as the fusion of religion and ritual (symbolic images, collective images, etc.);

4) The New Criticism and later on - definitions of the doctrine are based primarily on the definitions of art as an expression of experience: icons (or images) versus symbols: cognition images versus partial cognitions of science; the definition of the poem as "total experience" (or metaphorical knowledge of the world), versus Richards' definition of the poem as "pseudo-statement".

Obviously, the final shape of Ransom's theory, particularly in the form later accepted by Tate, Brooks and R.P. Warren, did not come about in its pure form immediately. The theory grew up together with Ransom's other teachings such as his views on language, poetic structure, meaning and metaphor, and the different roles of feelings, emotions and thoughts in poetry. However, there are essays, both earlier and later, which show the consistency in Ransom's thought as it was progressing towards its final form. These are: "A Psychologist Looks at Poetry" (1935), "Criticism, Inc." (1937), "Poetry as Pure Speculation" (1941), "I.A. Richards: A Psychological Critic" (1941), and "The Communities of Letters" (1952). According to the common topics, the material in these essays can be divided into two major groups: one related to Ransom's understanding of the function of poetry as knowledge without desire (a Neo-Kantian variation of Bergson and Croce); and the other serving Ransom's arguments against Richards' psychologism and his rejection of literary cognition or experience.

1) Poetry as Knowledge Without Desire

Ransom's theory of poetry as knowledge without desire could not be separated from his teachings about the autotelic function of poetry, the concrete universal and the function of criticism (i.e., "ontological criticism"). In addition to the early teaching of impersonalism, this is one of the few theories that Ransom did not expand; it stayed almost the same as when it was initially formulated. The theory shares the same initial premise with the theories mentioned above ("the poem is an aesthetic object"), but further than that it does not offer any new ground for discussion which would not be developed better in the other teachings. However, since it offers some metaphysical arguments useful for understanding Ransom's teachings in general, it is necessary to mention briefly the main points of this theory as well.

Regardless of the fact that the phrase "art as knowledge without desire" appears first in the essay "Art and Mr. Santayana" (1937),[26] the idea of poetry as _objective_ knowledge is discussed for the first time in "Flux and Blur in Contemporary Art" (1929).[27] In these essays and in a few others, Ransom pays tribute to Kant and Croce, praising Croce particularly for thinking that art should be treated differently, regarding its own authentic value, instead of being always judged according to other non-aesthetic standards. "Signor Croce is surely right in regarding it (i.e., art) as un-scientific, and in defending the absoluteness or particularity of its representations",[28] says Ransom. But it is not only that art implies an _aesthetic distance_ from any kind of moralism, emotions, sensibility of expressions and so on, art also implies _an order of existence_ (as Ransom would say later, in _The New Criticism_), a special status in regard to reality: "The work of art is its own infinitive self, containing that meaning, but not at all reducible to it, keeping its meanings like any other particular. It would seem that the artist as well as the metaphysician has a gift for looking upon reality".[29] This "looking upon reality" is going to be the most important part of Ransom's understanding of the relationship between literature and reality. Modifying slightly the Neo-Platonic mimetic theory, for in his version literature is the imitation of _spiritualized_ particulars, Ransom is closer to Aristotle in his acceptance of a Crocean adaptation of Kant's epistemology of two kinds of knowledge (i.e., intuitive, or _a priori_, and logical, or _a posteriori_). According to Croce, the artist can bring out the universal truth only through the realization of particular objects, i.e., *a priori* knowledge derives from the intuitive grasp of truth, going from the particulars to the universals. This is quite similar to Aristotle's distinction between historiography and literature; historiography deals with the universals and literature deals with the particulars.

However, there is a point where Ransom misreads Croce, trying to be even more radical than he in his own criticism of romanticism and emotionalism in poetry. Ransom misinterprets Croce several times, but always for the same reason, concerning the effect of intuition and *a priori* knowledge on the status of art. Since Ransom could not accept an inferior status for literature under any circumstances, and, at the same time, because he wanted to reject the ideas of those like George Moore who said that "most men read and write poetry" only in the pre-adult stage (i.e., being between fifteen and thirty-four, when they are "attracted by ideas"), he is forced to modify Croce's teaching. First of all, since he disagrees with Croce about the role of intuition in regard to logic, and accepts his teaching about the importance of intuition in creating images (when intuition equals cognitions), Ransom has to reverse the roles of intuition and logic either in regard to creating images, or in regard to knowledge. Since, unlike Bergson, who favors intuitive knowledge as *a posteriori* or final knowledge, Croce speaks only about intuitive knowledge as *a priori* knowledge (still in a Kantian traditional sense), and Jung interprets the *primordial* or collective images as our knowledge of the past (when a society was still young and primitive, i.e., in the pre-adult stage), Ransom at this point mistakenly combines these two quite different teachings.[30] He believes that any acceptance of intuition as an a priori or pre-logical knowledge means definitely lowering the rank or status of poetry to the pre-adult stage, in Moore's sense. Therefore, from now on he would insist on the mature, masculine and logical type of poetry, repeating it in almost every essay.[31]

However, in "Flux and Blur in Contemporary Art" Ransom says only that Croce is "in error" when he favors intuition instead of logic. The comparison with a child's experience would come later on, in The World's Body and in Poems and Essays. At this time, Ransom is still satisfied with the explanation that besides being the "representation of the particularity which real things possess", art is also feeling "converted into images", as Croce would say. But he is definitely against Croce's concept of a priori reality which "does not exist by itself, but only in individual products which it generates",[32] because Ransom's position does not allow the possibility for art to be the representation of only one type of reality, particularly not one of a pre-logical nature. Croce indeed lauds art and he should be given credit for emphasizing the role of images in creating experience, but, according to Ransom, this is not enough, and Croce did not follow all the way through in attributing the supreme role to art as offering the objective type of knowledge. Therefore, Ransom feels strongly in his rejection of Croce's a priorism of art, for the same reason that he rejects any type of poetry or criticism that would favor feelings above thoughts and logic. Accordingly, he is even more radical than Croce, Hulme or Eliot in his criticism of Romanticism. Ransom is against it because "Romantic literature is imperfect in objectivity, or 'aesthetic distance', and . . . out of this imperfection comes its weakness of structure; . . . the Romantic poet does not quite realize the aesthetic attitude and is not the pure artist". (WB, p. 333) But the main concern of Ransom is still his objection that Romanticism deals with emotions rather than with logic. This thought will be repeated over and over, appearing almost in each of Ransom's teachings, with only a slightly different disposition in the theory of impersonalism, as opposed to later teachings related to Freud or the concrete universal. Ransom's rejection of sensibility and emotions as a main vehicle of poetry was always very firm and consistent, even in the cases where he tried to modify and improve his basic theories.

For instance, after reading T.E. Hulme and the French Symbolists, E. Pound, E.A. Poe and T.S. Eliot, Ransom gradually shifts the focus of his attention from Kant and Croce towards Bergson, Hegel, Schelling and the brothers Schlegel (through the readings of Richards and Coleridge). Thus, after The World's Body (1938), Ransom would be closer to Bergsonian concepts of cognition and imagination, and closer to the Imagist definition of poetry propagated by Hulme, or shared by Poe. However, in spite of using the same anti-science arguments, Ransom would still remain suspicious about anyone propagating intuition or feelings above logic and cognition. The same paradoxical dilemma, what to choose and favor, Classicism or Romanticism,[33] would remain; but Ransom was already sufficiently closer to Bergson's position in The New Criticism (1941) to be able to drift away from Croce completely in Poems and Essays (1955). He could no longer accept Crocean aesthetics, because he sees them in the same way as he sees Romanticism and T.S. Eliot. Kantian aesthetics emphasize the fact that art seeks to formulate sensations (i.e., emotions and feelings, as taught by the Romanticists and T.S. Eliot, Croce and Richards) in order to particularize without pretensions either to imitate or verify the truth. Accordingly, cognition is possible only through reasoning and by the use of logical concepts. This is the main reason why Ransom attempts to reverse the principles of Kantian aesthetics. It is true, he says, that art deals with particulars first, but its final intention is to universalize, not to particularize. This is because, according to Ransom, art offers the universal truth, and science only the partial truth; thus, on the contrary, literature universalizes, and science particularizes. However, Ransom claims that even in literature this process happens always on the rational level. Secondly, combining Bergson's principles with Hulme's definition of poetry,[34] Ransom claims that the quality of the artistic imitation or presentation of real objects is always of a higher rank than that of the originals, because, says Ransom, the poetic images are the perfect equivalent of reality, representing only its most substantial features.[35]

However, being probably aware of the fact that the problem of universal truth could not be solved so easily by a simple reconciling of the perception theory with the theory of cognition, Ransom decided to introduce an additional metaphysical argument to support his theory: the concept of the concrete universal. In Ransom's interpretation this originally Hegelian concept is explained from the Neo-Kantian position.

2) Poetry as Knowledge of the World's Body: The Concept of the Concrete Universal

"A poetry may be distinguished from a poetry by virtue of subject-matter, and subject-matter may be differentiated with respect to its ontology, or the reality of its being", says Ransom. (WB, p. 111) This "reality" of the poem comes into being through the poet's full control of emotions (by diffusing them) and by his intellectual relationship towards the objects of his observation. Ransom criticizes Millay's poetry,[36] saying that she has fallen victim to the tyranny of emotions and meter. "There need not be an incompatibility between the man of intellect and the man of imagination",[37] says Ransom furthermore. The reason why Millay's poetry is bad has its foundations in her failure to achieve the strong grasp of reality as the intellectual or great poets do. In other words, her poetry did not "concretize" the universals of the real world which is to be achieved through the intellectual power to dissociate from irrelevant things. However, it seems that Ransom understands this "concretization of the universal" rather as a "fusion" or "unity", than as a selective process on the part of the poet.[38] As the critic John E. Magner says: "Ransom's artist is Aristotelian . . . he contemplates only the 'world's body' in its infinite particularity and tries to come to a knowledge which results in 'structure' and a feeling which results in 'tissues of irrelevancy'."[39]

From this early discussion of the concrete universal, which appears more or less complete in The World's Body,[40] we have learnt about Ransom's dedication to the particulars, about his notions of "objects" (or "things") as "ontological beings", and about the universals, or "thingness", as "ontological reality in itself". According to Ransom's theory of the ontological nature of poetry,[41] the ontological being of the poem is actually the pre-thematic or intellectual awareness of the real world (i.e., world's body). For example, whenever we speak about a person, a poem or anything else, we necessarily understand these things as beings, i.e., as realities in themselves, existing as something very concrete and specific, but different from anything else. Therefore, things or real objects differ from ideas not only by having defined common features, but also by being very unique and particular. On the contrary, the universality of ideas is always in their undefined vagueness. However, to understand completely what Ransom means by "ontological being", we have to consider also his discussion of the relationship between "ideas" and "images", which is very much related to the Medieval dispute between the Nominalists and the Realists. Unlike their opponents, the Realists, who claim that only ideas (i.e., universals) exist, because things are only copies or images of the universals; the Nominalists believe that, on the contrary, only the particulars are real, i.e., only things can exist. However, Ransom borrows the concept of images from Croce and says that "things" can exist only as images, and "every property discovered in the image is a universal property" which may easily be pinned down "historically and statistically as a single instance". (WB, p. 115) Following again in the footsteps of Croce, Ransom says that the images should be understood as pre-intellectual and independent of ideas; they are always in the natural or "wild" state; therefore, they possess a primordial freshness which ideas can never claim, but despite this, the images will always represent only the raw material of ideas.

As Y. Winters and J.E. Magner pointed out in their criticism of Ransom as nominalist and particularist,[42] Ransom's understanding of the relationships between mind and reality, ideas and things, or things and images, etc., is quite misleading. In spite of many explanations and examples for "knowledge without desire", "knowledge of the world's body", "knowledge by images", "knowledge of the concrete universal", "supreme or total knowledge", "knowledge of a higher rank than reality", etc., Ransom's definitions of poetry as knowledge lack the necessary bridge between the concepts of intellect and intuition, logic and emotions, cognitions and experience, perception and knowledge, etc., in order to overcome the initial gap between such conflicting premises as the autotelic status of literature (i.e., the poem as an aesthetic, non-referential object) and literature as knowledge (i.e., poetry being referential). He indeed tries to solve the problem by his dualistic theory of poetic structure which supposedly should not favor either logic or feelings. But, paradoxically enough, he would very easily forget this, describing the poet's primary task as the intellectual involvement in diffusing emotions, and spiritualizing the "precious and beloved objects". Or, on the other hand, he would put some restrictions on the functioning of the concrete universal in revealing the truth, but at the same time, he would not make any effort to explain why and how it happens. For instance, he is very categorical in saying that this cannot be done by emotions or logic, moralism or pure sense, through abstractions or recollections, etc., but there is no answer as how it can be done. Finally, and for the last time, in Poems and Essays (1955), Ransom tries once more to modify and improve his doctrine by introducing three new elements in "constructing" poetry: the pure universal, which exists only in mind, as ideational; the moral universal; and the concrete universal.[43] In the late 1940's, Ransom wrote a series of articles which showed the influence of Freud; therefore, now he sees the poem as referential to the poet's state of mind: the poem is verbally concretized out of the tension between the Id and the Ego.[44] In the early 1950's, this concretization takes place as the tension between the moral universal and the concrete universal, and it is verbally achieved through metaphor, meter and logic, three new and very important elements in the poetic structure.[45] Once again, the concrete universal represents the "fusion", the only "unity" that the poet is able to achieve in his presentation (or imitation) of reality.[46] According to Ransom, the poetic material exists in reality in its raw form, and only needs to be recognized and picked up by the poet, who will not transform it into something else, but put some clothing on it, and present it in its natural beauty.[47] Therefore the old ideas are still present; Ransom still has the same naturalist attitude towards reality, and still speaks about "precious and beloved objects" which, in his terminology, mean "chosen out of the familiar". But, after starting to read Freud, he introduces two new concepts of "tension" and moral universal which confront the concrete universal, now being some kind of Super-Ego or higher conscience, which would now replace his earlier concept of "logic". Thus, since his conception of art changed so drastically, all his other concepts now have to be changed and modified. For instance, the concept of "images", which he borrowed from Croce, now is interpreted according to the Jungian concept of primordial, collective images, and quite wrongly, Ransom comes to the conclusion that Croce's definition of art means lowering the status of literature to a "pre-adult stage of experience".[48] Again, since he cannot accept Croce's position that art represents intuitive knowledge, because images offer only an a priori type of experience, Ransom mistakenly understands this as putting the arts and the aesthetic experience into a very subordinate position versus science and its rational (i.e., a posteriori) experience. This is probably the same reason that led Ransom to remodel his conception of poetry in the first place, because the concept of tension, either between the Id and the Ego, or later on between the moral universal and the concrete universal, has a reconcilatory function. Since he still believes that logic is the only answer to the process of creation and experiencing the truth, which he constantly tries to reconcile, Ransom once again explains "concretization" as a purely rational act which happens when the poet's mind is in a stage of tension between animalistic affection and speculative appreciation for the objects in reality. In "The Inorganic Muses" (1943), this is described in the comparison of the dog with the poet:

> The dog is like a poet in doing more than to expect and calculate his creature benefits from the objects; for example, the smell of the master's tobacco must be 'vivid' to him yet without organic meaning. And the dog is a sort of religionist in the degree that the master's purposes and techniques remain inscrutable, and the dog's regard for them is speculative and humble.[49]

3) Poetry as Supreme Knowledge: Science versus Poetry as Symbols versus Icons; Arguments against Richards' Psychologism

Apart from metaphysical arguments, Ransom uses aesthetic or theoretical arguments to back up his viewpoints on the role of literature as knowledge. Besides Ransom's polemical critique of T.S. Eliot, Y. Winters or Romanticism, one of his most famous disputes is with Richards. This dispute has the broadest scale of perspectives, and it covers the range from language to aesthetics, from psychology to metaphysics, from epistemology to axiology, and so on. However, the basic disagreement starts with different ways of defining poetry and human experience.

Unlike Ransom, Richards defines poetry as a human activity not different from any other human activity, having its basis in perceiving things, and its result in communication.[50] Therefore, Richards is in favor of the perception theory all the way through: in the poet's relationship to reality, and in regard to the relationship between the reader and poetry. Furthermore, following the tradition of Kantian philosophy, Richards separates perceiving things (based on sensations and the senses) from experiencing things (based on rationalization, memory and knowledge). According to him, there is always only one reality in its totality, as there is only one experience and one total knowledge which includes knowing all the different things at the same time. This inseparability of experiencing and knowing things means that there are, on the other hand, many ways of perceiving things, because there are many emotions and sensations which could lead towards the same type of feelings. Therefore, by definition, science represents experiencing things, offering the actual knowledge based on experience and logic; and the arts represent perceiving things, offering to convey experience based on pseudo-statements and emotions. Thus, according to Richards, the function of the arts is in communication, rather than in offering concrete knowledge. The Arts are supposed to organize our impulses and attitudes in order to communicate the poet's feelings and sensations to the reader. Secondly, unlike Ransom, Richards does not believe that there is such a thing as an "aesthetic experience", because he does not accept discussing a literary work as an aesthetic object, and he is against the separation of "experiences". According to Richards, the so-called "aesthetic experience" is to be found in the audience, not in the literary work; the reader responds to the literary work in the same way as "Pavlov's dog would respond to the particular sign-situation".[51] Therefore, there are many responses to the same type of stimulus, just as there are many impulses to produce the same type of emotions and feelings.

Ransom immediately responded to this type of psychologism. First of all, he objected that the only business of the literary critic is to stay "exclusively with an aesthetic criticism". ("CPS", p. 233) Secondly, Richards' theory of impulses and sign-situation can be criticized also as an example of the positivistic formula applied to the psychological approach to literature, i.e., that one thing necessarily derives from another. Accordingly, this time Ransom was to criticize Richards for using the cause-effect formula to explain the relationship between the reader and the literary work. Since he thinks that psychological concepts such as stimulus and impulses should be replaced with aesthetic concepts, Ransom describes stimulus as an attitude representing the organized conative image, whose effect is the cognition image, this being an equivalent for Richards' sign-situation. The function of the organized conative image is to look outward in order to "invade the external world" and "make use of it". (NC, pp. 27, 28, et passim) On the other hand, the cognition images represent the external world in itself, whose function is to penetrate "throughout the experience" as both the emotive and conative elements, i.e., impulses.

Ransom's third argument is based on the differences between science and poetry in comprehending and expressing the real world. At this point, Ransom introduces a few new arguments to support his theory of poetry being above science. First of all, the world in which we live is different from the world which we treat in our scientific studies; therefore, already at the level of the subject matter, science deals with a partial perception and understanding of the world. Secondly, the poetic discourse, because of the ontological nature of poetry, always implies "an order of existence, a grade of objectivity which cannot be treated in scientific discourse" (NC, p. 281, et passim). And finally, unlike poetry, which uses a more complex way of comprehension and expression, i.e., icons or cognition images, science utilizes a very partial and limited means of expressions: symbols.

Taking over from Charles W. Morris and his teaching about three kinds of discourse (science, art and technology), (NC, pp. 282, 283, et passim), Ransom explains that each discourse operates on its own different level of meaning, using the appropriate kind of signs as its proper expression. Therefore, science employs symbols which have "no other character than that of referring to another object". In other words, scientific discourse operates mainly on the semantic level, while poetic discourse operates on the syntactical, and technological discourse on the pragmatical level. The validity of art seems to be in including both the emotional and rational comprehending of the real world, which is reflected in the use of icons; therefore, the main distinction is to be made based on the complexity of iconic signs versus the singularity of symbolic signs. Furthermore, the complexity of art is reflected also in its relationship to reality. Like technology, art is more "concerned with making something, as well as knowing something, while pure science seems concerned only with knowing something". (NC, pp. 283-284) Unlike symbols, the iconic or aesthetic signs have a two-fold function: to resemble and to imitate the objects (or artistic images) to which they refer as semantic objects. Thus, at this point, Ransom goes back to Plato and Aristotle, explaining the iconic character of aesthetic signs by the mimetic principles of the ancient poetics.

However, Ransom realizes that sometimes it might be difficult to distinguish between different kinds of icons or between what one particular icon represents in different kinds of art, painting, poetry, music, etc. For instance, poetry is a discourse in words wheresoever icons occur as evoked mental images; without any specific or necessary reference to the concrete material objects. "The technical use of language by the poet is one that lifts words out of their symbolic or definite uses into imaginative or image-provoking uses," says Ransom. (NC, p. 287) Thus, the differentia specifica between science and literature is discussed firstly on its pragmatical level. Besides being an objective knowledge, aesthetic discourse embodies certain value-properties as well, says Charles W. Morris. (Cf. NC, pp. 288-289) Ransom is not quite satisfied with this part of Professor Morris' theories, and he remarks that the aesthetic value-properties should be considered quite differently from those in science. Gaiety and sublimity are, among others, says Ransom, the most important aesthetic value-properties, whereas mass and velocity belong to scientific ones.

However, aesthetic value-properties are not indeed affective ones; neither are the scientific value-properties objective physical ones, argues Ransom. "The validity of a scientific discourse depends in part, we should say, on its semantical purity. That is, each symbol should refer to an object specifically defined, or having a specific value-aspect for the discourse; and throughout the discourse it should have exactly that reference and no other. The reference of a single symbol is limited, and uniform." (NC, pp. 290-291)

In scientific discourse, accordingly, we deal with a single value-system, which in art has its equivalent only in the paraphrase, in the "moral," in the theme, or is the prose-argument of the discourse which all offer the single-value system. The work of art is beyond its paraphrase because the icons represent the particularity of concrete objects referring to the whole at the same time, and embodying "too many properties, and too many values." The icon is always a particular, and it exceeds definition. In the play, for example, the icon is our image of Prince Hamlet, and it is never twice the same.

Unlike science, which is statemental and whose statements have predictive values, the world of art does not tolerate restrictions. The composition of a poem is designed by two intended elements: meaning and meter. Language possesses two properties, says Ransom; one is semantic, the other is phonetic. These properties are best employed in poetry. Ransom explains this phenomenon as the range of work as meaning and as the range of words as sound. The critic has to follow this pattern in his analysis literally, because the ontological nature of poetry is reflected in its texture.

IV. RANSOM'S CONCEPT OF PLATONISM AND THREE TYPES OF POETRY:

1) Ransom's Definitions of the Poem and Poetry

One of the major problems raised by Ransom's criticism is its relationship to the writing of other critics, not only because he quotes them extensively in all of his books and essays, but because every detail shows how much he assimilates and accepts from the original texts of the others. His approach indeed shows also that he tries to force his way through, but, at the same time, his incredibly intolerant and preaching tone says that most of the time he is opinionated on grounds of taste, rather than because he has a new piece of evidence to offer. Thus, in order to defend weak points in his theories, he is willing to construct the most complicated mechanisms of defense around some quite simple premises. This initial obsession became a necessity, and soon all his theories were chained one to another, so that there is no theory now in his critical system that is not a part of several others, all of them outlined to defend some dubious position; they are interrelated and protecting each other at the same time. One of many tasks of this type is his apology for poetry, i.e., his fight, against so-called "Platonism".

In addition to the already partially discussed problems appearing in "Poetry: A Note on Ontology",[52] Ransom's major theme, how to distinguish three types of modern poetry, has not yet been discussed here. According to their relationship to reality, i.e., the ontological nature of poetry, there are three types of poetry: 1) Physical Poetry, or poetry of things, represented by Imagism; 2) Platonic

Poetry, or poetry of ideas, written in the manner of Victorian Poetry; and 3) Metaphysical Poetry, or poetry of images, represented by the intellectual poetry of the seventeenth century as his model: John Donne and so-called Metaphysicals.

Ransom criticizes the first two types of poetry from the points of view of Aristotle's conception of imitation and Kant's conception of the aesthetic beautiful. According to the application of the first principle, Ransom says that we value art because it is an imitation, and "we value imitation because it gives us pleasure" by being the representation of natural beauty. In terms of validity, the aesthetic beautiful is always of a higher rank than the original object. (WB, pp. 196-197, et passim) This has its explanation in Ransom's theory of literature as knowledge, but also in his teaching about imagination which is completely different than in the case of Richards' or the other New Critics, who all, more or less, follow in the footsteps of the Coleridgian tradition.

Probably the most surprising element in his writing on imagination is his description of it as "spiritual happenings". According to Ransom, "intellect in the special sense is supposed to be pure thought engaged in a series of technical or abstract processes". Moreover, "to be intellectual is to be disciplined in technique and stocked with learning, a very great advantage for every purpose, and even for fertilizing the pleasures of imagination". (WB, pp. 196-197, et passim) Therefore, imagination is the faculty "by which we are able to contemplate things as they are in their rich and contingent materiality". (WB, pp. 100-101) The other characteristic of imagination, in

Ransom's opinion, is in being "an organ of knowledge whose technique is images. It presents to the reflective mind the particularity of nature." The image presented by imagination "ordinarily means to be true". (WB, p. 156) For Ransom, imagination is the organ by which we "secure the particularity of objects", whereas there is quite another organ, "working by a technique of universals" to serve science. (WB, pp. 156, 162) Thus, imagination is "a faculty of excessive versatility: equally ready to take the photograph of objective reality, or to reproduce it from memory, or to create it originally in a painting; and, if the last, the detail is perceptual but not actually perceived". (WB, p. 292) It seems that Ransom's insistence on the reconciliatory character of imagination represents his last effort to solve the conflict between the two poles in his theory of poetic (dual) structure. Therefore, even feelings become controlled by intellectual constructions, but they "find appropriate actions through imagination". (WB, p. 291) However, altogether, imagination must be representative, or realistic, in order that "poetry may speak the truth". (WB, p. 293) That is the most important task of imagination, says Ransom.

Applied to the chosen types of poetry, these explanations become more significant, slightly changing the meaning of the definitions in focus. For instance, Ransom would criticize both Physical Poetry for being simplistic and too realistic in dealing with things,[53] and Platonic Poetry for being too idealistic and lacking purity in dealing with things which are translatable into ideas;[54] but he would praise Metaphysical Poetry for dealing with reality through images.[55] Paradoxically, for him any Platonism is a hybrid performance, rather than Metaphysical Poetry, just as Imagist poetry is about things, not about images. Accordingly, there is a connection between Platonism and Imagism, and Platonic Poetry is only an imitation of Physical Poetry, which means "not really a poetry". Therefore, "Platonists practise their bogus poetry in order to show that an image will prove an idea, but the literature which succeeds in this delicate mission does not contain real images, but illustrations", concludes Ransom. (WB, p. 128)

However, in criticizing Plato by quoting the statement "The great forces are persistent in Plato: the love of truth and zeal for human improvement", (WB, p. 123) Ransom does not recognize the same forces in himself and the great expectations that he always had of literature: to be truthful more than anything else, and to enable people to get to know more by reading poetry than by studying science. This Neo-Platonic idealism is present even more in Ransom's next remark, which complains that Platonism has failed because it has shown the signs of an inability to reconcile the world of idea with the world of perception. (WB, p. 123) His ironic statement that the only difference between a scientific document and a poetic text is that the document consists of "only abstract ideas with no images" (WB, p. 120) has the same type of terrible understatement as do his classifications of allegory, Romantic Irony, and all kinds of "elaborations" of patriotic, religious, moral or social ideas, as Platonisms. (WB, p. 122, 126, 121)

The ideal type of poetry is Metaphysical Poetry which refers "perhaps almost entirely to the so-called 'conceits' that constitute its style". (WB, p. 132) To define the conceit means to define small-scale Metaphysical Poetry, i.e., its effects. A conceit originates in a metaphor; thus, all Metaphysical Poetry is an extension of rhetorical devices such as metaphorical speech, tropes, meter, and fiction. (WB, Cf. throughout pages 130-134, et passim, p. 137) The illusion of reality is obtained by keeping the customary demand to be "true to life"; therefore, fiction as the device is extremely important, because "it is generally easier to obtain our aesthetic experience from art than from nature, because nature is actual, and [its] communication is forbidden". (WB, p. 132) At this point, it is not very clear why Ransom is against Platonic Poetry which utilizes the same technique, while, at the same time, Metaphysical Poetry is being defined as "the most original and exciting, and intellectually perhaps the most seasoned" type of poetry. (WB, p. 135) Many critics have pointed out that Ransom's explanations are not always satisfactory; one of them, Chicago critic R.S. Crane, summarizes the main complaints against Ransom in the following way:

> In spite of the fact that Mr. Ransom writes in full awareness of Johnson's use of the term (metaphysical poetry) and that both critics refer to some of the same seventeenth-century poets, the real object of discussion in the two is only minimally identical, the object envisaged by Johnson being a historically determinate 'race' of poets in the generation before Dryden, to whom he attributes certain excesses and defects in the light of his general criteria for poetry of any kind, whereas the object of concern for Mr. Ransom, as constituted in the terms of his essay, is strictly not a particular school of poets at all but a universal kind of poetry, the nature of which is determined, in his definition, by the opposition he established between it and the two contrasting extremes of 'physical poetry' on the one hand, and 'platonic poetry' on the other.[56]

In Ransom's explanation this meant that Platonic Poetry was "too idealistic", while Physical Poetry was "too realistic" to be good. The contribution of the Metaphysicals was in introducing the "psychological device" of miracle which permits a predication different from a predication of science. The scientific predication concludes "an act of attention, but miraculism initiates one." (WB, p. 142, see also pp. 139 and 140.) Thus, the predication of Metaphysical poetry is not true like history, because poetry can be true only in a certain pragmatic sense like some of the generalizations of science. In other words, there is no poetry that can be true in the sense of the truth of history, but even science is only partially true in that sense.

It is obvious that Ransom thinks here in terms of Aristotle's distinction between the universal and the particular, referring even to the same Aristotelian example of the differences between historiography and poetry. His speculations are an incredible mixture of Platonism and Aristotelianism, more than of Hegelianism and Kantianism, on whose side he would prefer to be discovered. Starting with the Neo-Platonist teaching about ideas (things do not exist, they are images), Ransom was able to shift the discussion to the Neo-Aristotelian distinction between universals and particulars. However, it should be pointed out that in Plato demythologization plays a completely different or negative role. Plato accuses poets of having a bad effect on young people by using myth to obscure the truth. Ransom prefers the term "miraculism" instead of myth or mythologization, but contrary to Plato, he believes that poets do say the truth about reality.

The conflict in Ransom's speculation exists as a conflict between his teaching about images, which are copies of ideas, and his ambition to prove that poetry offers a knowledge about the world, and even to show that knowledge is universal rather than particular. He sympathizes more with the hard-headed Aristotle than with the poetic Plato, but his logic is far from having either an Aristotelian or a Platonic speculative ability. The problem of the distinction between scientific knowledge and poetic knowledge may be traced back much earlier than Hulme's or Richards' discussion on Romanticists concerning science and poetry. Actually, this problem is one of the major problems of hermeneutics, the modern as well as the old one. The idea of two kinds of truth is parallel in some ways to the medieval distinction between sacra and profana, the Thomist distinction between divine science and poetic knowledge, and also to the distinction made by the Enlightenment between reason and spirit. However, unlike those of New Criticism, most modern theories of art set aside the concept of truth as being irrelevant to their subject matter. Ransom in a sense accepts Aristotle's aesthetics, but he does not accept his rejection of the concept of truth as irrelevant for poetry. Quite on the contrary, he accepts Plato's position that saying the truth not only is relevant, but is the most important issue of the arts. Thus, in fighting Platonism, Ransom never actually succeeded, because his poetics are essentially Platonist, i.e., based on the theory of imitation and the representation of truth.

The result of this type of attitude is that there are too many variations and unnecessary changes in Ransom's definitions of poem and poetry. They vary too often because they were preconditioned to be modified in order to serve only one purpose: to further explain the specific aspects of Ransom's preferences for one type of critical thinking, one direction, and one specific set of demands which were not based on the natural development of his theories. In other words, each of Ransom's major critical doctrines creates the possibility for a new set of definitions which might legitimize to the greatest extent Ransom's intimate support for certain types of criticism. This explains, on the one hand, why Ransom has to discuss more of his own critical positions, rather than to give more examples of his analyses of different types of poetry; and, on the other hand, that is why he has to offer so many definitions of poetry which are based on the subject-matter, the end of the poem, or on the quality of the poetic structure.[57] More interested in defending his views than in defining more precisely what he means by composition and poetic devices, Ransom makes his theories even more difficult to understand by fathering dozens and dozens of new variations of the same theory. Quite often, he would start all over again, going through hundreds of distinctive aspects of certain problems, not in order to bring clarity or truth to the solution of the problem, but to reveal his specific motives for creating those very same theories. Before we discuss this aspect of Ransom, let us first see a few examples of Ransom's definitions.

Ransom's definitions of poetry are usually made within the framework of a few fixed predominants which are interrelated. These are four: the poet, the poem, reality, and the difference between poetry and prose. "The poet perpetuates in his poem an order of existence which in actual life is constantly crumbling beneath his touch", says Ransom. "His poem celebrates the object which is real, individual, and qualitatively infinite." (WB, p. 384) "Since, on the technical side, "Poetry distinguishes itself from prose" by devices "which are, precisely, its means of escaping from prose", the critic has to reverse the poet's proceeding by taking the poem apart "for the sake of uncovering these features". (WB, p. 349) To identify the poetic object means to find out the universal or commonplace object to which the poem refers, as well as to pin down the totality of connotation, which holds it secure. (WB, p. 348) Since it is much easier to discover the universal object, which is "a kind of story, character, thing, scene, or moral principle", (WB, p. 348) many critics stay at the level of paraphrase.[58] The character of the poem resides "in its way of exhibiting the residuary quality", (WB, p. 349) and Ransom thinks that its complete explanation is impossible.

However, there are some preconditions which help the critic to distinguish between the bad and the good things in poetry. Some of these are already mentioned in the discussion of the three types of poetry. Since the others are spread around in various essays, let us compare a few definitions of good and bad poetry which happen to appear in The New Criticism. First, the "beautiful" poem:[59]

1) A beautiful poem is one which proceeds to the completion of a logical structure, but not without attention to the local particularity of its components.

2) A beautiful poem is a democratic state, so to speak, which realizes the ends of a state without sacrificing the personal character of its citizens.

3) A beautiful poem is an objective discourse which we approve, containing objective detail which we like.

Next come the special definitions of the poem's structure, or the structural definitions of the poem:[60]

1) The poem is a loose logical structure with an irrelevant local texture.

2) The poem must have logic, meaning, sense; that is its character, but not the immediate character of the poet.

3) The poem is a complex of meaning; with its two distinguishable features: a logical structure and a local texture; and a complex of sound, with its two corresponding features: a meter, and a musical phrasing of the poem. One may assume that all these features are interrelated; thus we can speak about phonetic and musical phrases, structural and textural meanings, phonetic meaning of the texture, etc. However, meter would mark the poetic quality of the poem.

And finally, let us see some definitions of "bad" poetry, or poetry in general:[61]

1) A great deal of poetry is analogous to ordinary painting; it simply presents its objects in detail without ever exceeding actual observation. This is poetry of a primary or of the simplest order, which does not give us scientific truth, but every detail in it is accurate. This poetry lacks "contemplation" (which is Ransom's equivalent for imagination).

2) Poetry is a form of knowledge. Imagination, whose technique is images, is an organ of knowledge which supplies the form of knowledge for poetry. The image presented by imagination means to be verifiable, to be true, based on observation.

3) Poetry distinguishes itself by an act of will from prose, both being based on language and experience, but poetry, taking the technical effects of prose, which are hard, softens them, or dissolves them in a total experience.

And now, when we have nine different definitions of the poem and poetry, along with the three previously discussed types of poetry, let us see how they are reflected in Ransom's analysis of poetry. The questions which we are seeking to justify are as follows: Are these definitions real preconditions for Ransom's analysis? How much can they effect Ransom's conclusion about particular poetry? Does Ransom violate the text in order to adjust his theories to the analysis of particular poems?

2) Ransom's Analysis of Poetry:

a) Milton's Lycidas

One of the first, and probably the best, of Ransom's analyses of poetry is his analysis of Milton's Lycidas.[62] This clever and convenient choice of one of Milton's most controversial and most ambiguous poems serves Ransom by backing up the first claim in his poetics that anonymity is the first precondition of great poetry.

According to the traditional interpretations of Milton,[63] this ambiguity is based on several factors: 1) the restrictions and difficulties in defining precisely the real and proper subject-matter of the poem: Is Lycidas a poem about Edward King? Is it about Milton? About the fear of dying young? About "water"? About archetypes? etc.; 2) the unconventional (or the conventional) form of pastoral; 3) language; 4) imagery and symbols: i.e., a semantic level of the poem. According to the individual preference for one of these four topics, Ransom's analysis could not be classified as unusual, not as too original, even if all four factors are taken into consideration. Thus, the validity of Ransom's interpretation is not in its originality, but in its presentation. He also examines language, imagery and symbols; he speaks about conventionality or unconventionality of form; the only difference is that he does not find anything ambiguous about the topic of the poem.

Ransom's approach is quite different. He believes that Lycidas is a literary exercise, as well as an exercise in "pure linguistic technique", and in "point of view". "So is almost any other poem earlier than the eighteenth century; the craftsmanship, the formal quality which is written on it, is meant to have high visibility", says Ransom. (The World's Body, p. 4) From the initial premise Ransom draws two conclusions; A) being only a piece of craftsmanship, or exercise, Lycidas does not need the ambiguity of the subject-matter; on the contrary, it needs the anonymity of the poet; and B) Milton's intention to be anonymous and his decision to write a poetic exercise result in a "not quite resolvable dualism"; (WB, p. 3) that is, "the poet must suppress the man, or the man would suppress the poet". (WB, p. 3) Also, this conflict is actually the main source of the ambiguities that occur in the poem.

According to Ransom, this approach of the poet's anonymity is the best and only way to express eligibly anything that the poet wants. Instead of behaving like today's young men who try to become poets by writing "some of their intenser experiences, their loves, pities, griefs, and religious ecstasies; but too literally, faithfully, piously, ingenuously", by putting on the mask of anonymity, Milton instead creates the opportunity of expressing whatever he wants to say for himself, or for his principles. Ransom finds this to be a regular practice of seventeenth century poetry. Anonymity and craftsmanship are needed "according to the gentle and extremely masculine tradition" of elegy, because the performance of the poet "is not rated by rending of garments, heartbreak, verisimilitude of desolation". Ransom compares it with the pomp at the funeral of the king, "whom everybody mourns publicly and nobody privately". (WB, pp. 4-5, 5) And he goes on to prove it by first examining the meter of Lycidas. He finds the whole poem to be extremely unconventional, "a very free adaptation of the canzone" with stanzas of "indeterminate length", uneven rhythm and "intricate rhyming scheme". (WB, pp. 7, 9) This "destructive freedom" of Milton's is deliberate, says Ransom, and it is needed to diffuse and neutralize the natural man in the poet, on the one hand, and to rebel against the formalism and conventions of his time, on the other hand. Lycidas "was written smooth and rewritten rough; which was treason", thinks Ransom. (WB, pp. 11, 12 in comparison with 7, 9) According to him, vers libre is always inferior in comparison to rhyme, and breaking metric conventions is the characteristic of a modern poet.

Apart from Ransom's conclusions, which will be discussed later on, most of his assumptions sound very familiar. The terminology is slightly different, since this is his first essay in poetics, but the major ideas are exactly the same as those expressed many years later on. For instance, when Ransom speaks about suppressing emotions and the "natural man": in Milton's case, by using meter, by a different rhythm and the unconventional length of his stanzas, as well as by putting on the mask of anonymity in order to be able to speak about his own experience; Ransom is actually for the first time expressing the main points of his future poetics. For example, let us mention the essays "The Tense of Poetry" (1935) and "Yvor Winters: The Logical

Critic" (1941), which both discuss the problems of meter and under what rules the poet works. Here Ransom says that "the poet requires a technique for escaping techniques", which he does by putting on the mask. (WB, pp. 256, 257) Since poetry is an artifice, practised with an adult cunning, and since meter is an artificial language; this mask is the meter; "The more accurate the meters, the freer and more incalculable the discourse", claims Ransom. (WB, pp. 256, 257-258) Unfortunately, "Milton elected to sacrifice it".

The second prescript, or technique, for writing poetry is to put on the costume, i.e., to impersonate the period, or the character, or probably both at once, in order to unify the poem and to bind the play of sensibility in it. Again the same idea of playing the character-part. And Ransom makes this conclusion:

> The advantage of the mask is negative, inhibiting the prose function and releasing the aesthetic function, but the advantage of the costume is positive, giving form to the aesthetic activity. (WB, p. 259)

Ransom's position in "Yvor Winters: The Logical Critic" has slightly changed. Because he now believes that meter belongs to the local texture, and it does not have a direct effect on the total meaning of the poem, its function is explained now as dual; first, to serve as a regular pattern such as may be defined for the given poem; and secondly, to be under the regular pattern as its variations, in order to make a special mark on the poem if metrical effects are wanted. (NC, pp. 259-261, 262, et passim) However, Ransom once more expressed the regret that "the poets of our time have been insensitive to metrical niceties" as the poets of "no earlier period have been" before.

(NC, p. 254) He still thinks that "one of the values of free verse is to send us back rejoicing to fixed meters", (NC, p. 269) and that we should agree with Winters who said that "the meter is the frame of reference against which we can locate and define the phrase". (NC, p. 269) Obviously, there are other possible examples, but these already mentioned above should prove that Ransom's analysis of Milton's Lycidas is indeed compatible with his theoretical concepts. Then, let us see now how his interpretation performs on the scale of literary history and the other interpretations of the poem.

In spite of the fact that many critics disagree about the validity and objectivity of Ransom's interpretations,[64] in general his analysis of Lycidas was well received and praised even above the standards of usual interpretations of Milton. However, one of the best experts and connoisseurs of Ransom's theory, Louis B. Rubin, has made some very strong objections against Ransom's analysis, claiming that instead of interpreting Milton, "Ransom was pondering his own situation".[65] Rubin was particularly angry about Ransom's biographical sketches of Milton and in regard to other personal assumptions which were incorporated in the analysis, such as Milton's going over a "smoothly written poem and deliberately coarsening it", being "capable of perfect logic", but being a strongly passionate man with "intense personal, moral and political principles" as well.[66] Rubin complained that Ransom wanted to see himself in Milton; therefore he projected and attributed his own desires, behavior and characteristics to Milton, and this had a decisive impact on his analysis. Rubin says that it is completely irrelevant to introduce biographical data, when it is obvious that the critic introduces them because they coincide with his own personal data, or when he can identify with them as a part of his own life. He says: "I am not at all convinced that Ransom's depiction of Milton corresponds to the biographical John Milton; but beyond a doubt it corresponds to the situation of John Crowe Ransom in the early 1930s."[67] The second argument of Rubin's was that Milton was not the only English poet who wrote pastorals, behaved and had the type of life as described by Ransom, and so if Ransom depicts it as something very unusual, he must have a good reason for so doing. Since the apparent reason could not be found in the poem, this reason is a part of Ransom's personal motivation.

Many others have agreed with Rubin, but a still more serious criticism came from M.H. Abrams. He said not only that Milton was not the only English poet who has taken liberties to deliberately distorted the conventional form of the pastoral, but, as a matter of fact, Ransom is the most mistaken when he claims that the uses of free verse, deliberately cutting off the rhythm, changing the length of stanzas and other technical novelties should be understood "as arrogant gestures of Milton's originality". On the contrary, says Abrams, these are examples in which Milton "closely follows established conventions".[68] Scholarly studies have proved that the model for Milton's elaborate _canzone_, with the same variable structure, unrhymed lines and unusual stanzas, was employed by "several Italian lyricists of the sixteenth century". Therefore, historically, Ransom's comments on meter and form do not have appropriate backing. He is wrong also about the satire against the clergy, which was neither Milton's specialty, nor his innovation. As a matter of fact, Petrarch was responsible for this widespread convention; and he was "hardly vulgar, nor a Puritan, nor even a Protestant". According to Abrams, only once was Ransom completely right: in his pointing out that Milton's putting elegy into narrative conclusion without matching the narrative introduction of the poem at the very beginning is not traditional. But even so, this is not at any rate enough "to make Milton out to assert his own egoism", and to change him from "the entirely conventional rural singer of a pastoral elegy" into something else.

b) Edna St. Vincent Millay

From a strictly literary point of view, Ransom's essay "The Poet as Woman" (1937)[69] is one of his best and most interesting literary writings. It is a biased, one-sided, and very dogmatic piece of criticism; but as a literary essay it represents a charming and artful piece of literature which says some dramatic truths about poetry by its overly subjective understatements. Indeed this paradox is possible, and, generally speaking, the essay is overlooked and quite underestimated.

In spite of having a different topic, Ransom uses the same critical approach as in his analysis of *Lycidas*. The central topic is Ransom's anti-affectionism. As in the case of *Lycidas*, he would criticize Edna St. Vincent Millay's poetry for the same reasons as he had criticized Milton's modernity: both Millay and Milton let their affections and meter get in the way of their logic. As was mentioned so many times in his theory, Ransom is against any kind of emotionalism;

his ideal is John Donne as the epitome of the intellectual, no-nonsense masculine type of poetry.[70] Ransom's taste is the same as that of T.S. Eliot or T.E. Hulme: he likes dry and restrained, mind-controlled poetry: dissociation of sensibility. However, this is only the starting point, the theoretical background of Ransom's analyses, and it does not represent what one should assume to be the best part of the poems which are interpreted.

The best parts of the essay are when Ransom analyzes the poetic imagery and when he confronts a few examples of bad poetry with examples of good poetry. Let us ignore for the moment the theoretical aspects of the essay,[71] and see how Ransom comments on Miss Millay's poetry. He starts his analysis by disputing the influence of Donne on Millay's poetry as Elizabeth Atkins had suggested in her extensive book on Miss Millay. Here is the example; first by Miss Millay, second by Donne:

1) I burn my candle at both ends,
It will not last the night,
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends,
it gives a lovely light;

2) We are tapers too, and at our own cost die.

Ransom thinks that any comparison fails because of the last two lines in Millay's quatrain. Donne simply "could not have endured for their foolish ejaculations, so twinned yet laboriously varied, and for the poverty of the vulgar lovely". This is overwriting, continues Ransom. "To wish to make a thing look pretty or look smart is to think poorly of it in itself and to want it more conventional, and to try to improve it is to weaken and perhaps destroy it". (WB, pp. 81-82)

Ransom's criticism is sharp, but he is right; particularly when his writing is a direct close-reading of the text, not affected by his obscure theories. He is on the right track, and the second example shows it even more. Being a poet himself, and a good poet indeed, Ransom indicates the importance of the poet's well-defined poetic language and phraseology, showing how the language reflects the specific features of the particular poet. For instance, he quotes the sonnet which begins like Donne, but later on it ends without having the same impact. His idea is to make a comparison on the larger scale and show what was missing in Millay's poetry to permit her to represent the same type of genuine intellectual poetry as Donne's. Here is Miss Millay's sonnet with Ransom's choice of words underlined; Miss Millay's own marking of her translation from the Latin is represented by indented lines:

Heart, have no pity on this house of bone:
Shake it with dancing, break it down with joy.
No man holds mortgage on it; it is your own;
To give, to sell at auction, to destroy.
When you are *blind to moonlight* on the bed,
When you are *deaf to gravel* on the pane,
Shall *quavering* caution from this house instead
Cluck forth at summer mischief in the lane?
  All that delightful youth forbears to spend
  Molestful age inherits, and the ground
  Will have us; therefore, while we're young, my friend -
The Latin's vulgar, but the advice is sound.
Youth, have no pity; leave no *farthing* here
For age to invest in compromise and fear. (*WB*, p. 82)

First of all, according to Ransom, it is obvious that Miss Millay is an eclectic rather than an intellectual poet.[72] Her expressions are "slightly overdone and inferior to the direct" expressions which would be chosen by Donne (cf. "blind to moonlight" and "deaf to gravel" versus the simpler and more direct see not the moonlight and hear not the gravel). (WB, p. 83) The caution personified in these lines is pretty but weak, and though "its quality might be quavering and clucking," the prediction for this caution in line 8 (which is the whole emphasis of the quatrain) is trifling. It would be possible to choose cluck, cluck up or cluck out, but Miss Millay's expression cluck forth is a "miscegenation, from which issue is unlikely". Furthermore, the passage from the Latin, i.e., the three indented lines, is too literary and "impeaches the genuineness of the passion". In this American idyll, the expression farthing is also out of place. The last line has to be completely rewritten because fear is better "alone than compounded with compromise". Thus, the last line should be:

"For age to invest it, and in what but fear";

which is obviously more effective than the line written by Miss Millay:

"For age to invest in compromise and fear".

And Ransom goes on with his comments, criticizing Miss Atkins too, for her illusory discoveries (Ransom remarked correctly that Father Hopkins did not influence T.S. Eliot but that the French Symbolists did), and Miss Millay for her preoccupation with sound and meter. But, apart from all the errors of Atkins, and all the limitations of Millay, Ransom stresses the lack of intellectual interest, which he symbolically identifies with a deficiency in masculinity, as the main problem of feminine or sentimental poetry. (WB, pp. 90, 98 et passim) Exceptional or expressive poetry, which is popularly called intellectual poetry, is not so rare, says Ransom. To find it, it is necessary "to know the real capacity of poetry as an instrument. It is a piano, a well-tempered clavier, and does not have to stick to the rules of violin". (WB, pp. 98-99) In other words, the exceptional poetry cannot be reduced to the following: the picturization of simple and pleasant objects, though it might be valuable for poets to discover them; the display of generous human; the worship of Nature; the love of natural effects; etc. "These are earlier [juvenile] bits of poetry", says Ransom. In general, any kind of poetry which describes and needs a simple treatment, such as the delight of the senses, the concerns of elemental passion, or even the guilt of civilized man, is inferior to intellectual poetry. (WB, pp. 99, 100) This type of poetry, emotional and simple, Ransom calls "real poetry", accurate but without intellectual power. His conception of poetry is not suited for any kind of poetry that is simple, spontaneous, and straightforward in diction; according to Ransom, all these represent "indomitable feminine principles". Unfortunately, based on his too personal and too restricted taste and preferences, this explanation is theoretically unacceptable; therefore, Ransom would try again to find another explanation for this position.

In two essays, "The Tense of Poetry" (1935) and "Sentimental Exercise" (1936),[73] Ransom offers new theoretical arguments to defend his one-sided, anti-emotional poetic formula expressed in "The Poet as Woman". His approach is to focus on the definition of "sentiment" as a concept truly different from feelings or emotions. Unlike feelings and emotions, which are basically psychological concepts, the concept of sentiment is an aesthetic concept which can be used artfully as a poetic device.[74] In pursuing his idea that poetry is poetic reflection and recreation of the past,[75] Ransom demonstrates the distinction between sentiment and feelings (or emotions) by analyzing Tennyson's poem "Tears, Idle Tears", and then by defining the concept of sentiment from the final results of the analysis. Quoting "In looking on the happy Autumn-fields, / And thinking of the days that are no more", Ransom explains that these lines are definitely written by a profound, melancholic poet, "who was nostalgic almost to the point of bitterness, and puzzled about the source of his resentment" because he could not reconcile himself to the "creature comforts of his century". (Ibid.) The quoted lines are a reflection of the poet's homesickness, but "not clearly directed". As in the title of the poem (why the tears?), it is not clear what days are referred to. However, Ransom's analysis lacks any real evidence for the claims made. As Lee T. Lemon points out, "when Ransom attempts to apply his version of perception theory the result is usually a criticism of imagery".[76] In other words, Lemon is saying that Ransom picks up one particular detail which might be analyzed by itself, and then he assigns its meaning to another detail, another passage or even to the main theme of the poem, without any particular reason for doing so. Lemon demonstrates this by another example of Ransom's analysis of Tennyson, showing how Ransom's predeterminate theoretical assertions leave out the most important parts of the text in order to emphasize others and to persuade the reader of the validity of his analysis. But let us first see Ransom's analysis. In the lines "Come into the garden, Maud, / For the black bat, night, has flown," regardless of the function of the black bat the imagery predicates the mood and emotions expressed in the stanza about flowers:

> The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near";
>   And the white rose weeps, "She is late";
> The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear";
>   And the lily whispers, "I wait".

Ransom thinks that the poetic value of the poem was destroyed by introducing a few superfluous affective details such as the black bat and certain emotional, "school-girl's made-up metaphors" in the stanza about the flowers. In Ransom's opinion, the line would be complete if the poet had said simply "The black night is flown", and according to his interpretation, it is not clear why the poet needed the plurality of images in the flower symbolism when they "do not sustain themselves individually" and their "distinctness is too arbitrary". The flowers were introduced earlier to stand for the lover's thoughts, and Ransom is convinced that it was not necessary to make them distinct by colors. In other words, as in the case of the "black bat", the lines would be complete even without the reference to red, white, or any other color of roses: The rose cries instead of "The red rose cries", etc.

Lee T. Lemon objected that Ransom is using the perception theory to persuade us, but he is unable to do so, because it is indeed possible to show the functionality of Tennyson's symbolism. Different colors represent different qualities and degrees of emotions, says Lemon. Red is representing a passionate cry, white is innocence, and so on. This symbolism is maybe too "tenuous", and the critical reader may have some mental reservations about the images and their effectiveness, but their use is quite legitimate, and there is nothing wrong in

Tennyson's usage of the black bat or the red rose as poetic symbols. In other words, Ransom fails to convince us either that there is some negative or emotional core in these symbols, or that emotionalism negatively "affects" the poem.[77]

Ransom must be aware that this position does not sound very convincing, because, as already mentioned, he tried to defend it theoretically by making the distinction between sentimentalism and emotionalism; i.e., between sentiments, on one side; and feelings and emotions, on the other. Drawing the final conclusion from his analysis of Tennyson and many other poets, Ransom claims that most poems reflect the poet's obsession or nostalgia for something that happened in the past. This poetic recreation of the past experience can turn out to be good (if it is based on sentiments) or bad (if it reflects pure emotions), and it generally affects the validity of the poem. Obviously, as one can see, Ransom is using Wordworth's argument of poetry as an emotion recollected in order to fight Coleridge's and Richards' emotionalism. This is not a pure Wordsworthian position, because Ransom turns the whole argument upside down, mixing together Wordsworth's concept with both the concepts of perception theory and those of cognition theory. This is demonstrated clearly in Ransom's description of four possible situations in which sentiment would occur:[78]

1) Sentiment attaches to an old or familiar object when it is gone; in other words, sentiment is very close to nostalgia, the remembrance of the past.

2) Sentiment comes in spontaneously and involuntarily, when we start getting used to something, and then we end loving it. For example, "love is the sentiment", says Ransom, because we could not have gotten it if the sentiment had not happened.

3) Sentiment is highly individual, and has a great deal of quality over and above the object's utility. For example, in the comparison of the real value of a house and its sentimental value, the latter would usually prevail as being above monetary value.

4) Sentiment requires of us the cognition of the object as an individual. This means that we have to know everything about the object in order to be able to recreate it in our memory. In other words, sentiment is the loving reconstruction of the past experience of some familiar and vanished object.

Unfortunately, this theorizing fails to provide the evidence about any clear distinction between sentiment and emotion. In spite of Ransom's efforts, none of his examples shows the necessity for this distinction either. As a matter of fact, to be more precise, Ransom's concept of sentiment is an emotion in disguise, only a version or an evolutive form of a recollected emotion in the Wordsworthian sense.

c) Shakespeare's Sonnets

The main subject-matter of Ransom's analysis of Shakespeare's sonnets is the determinacy of meaning and the function of metaphor. In the essay "Shakespeare at Sonnets" (1938), (WB, pp. 270-304) Ransom evolved his views on metaphor, and instead of his typical duality of confronting elements (logic vs. emotions, elements of structure vs. elements of texture, etc.), here he introduces the new function for metaphor which takes on most of the qualities that usually belong to logic. In this essay, metaphor represents the most dominant element of the poem's total composition, partly taking over the functions of the directive mental powers of the poet's intellect, as well as being an adequate objective form for his emotions. Ransom still believes strongly in the intellectively controlled emotions; therefore, he still expects the reader to prefer the emotions which are the result of intellectual recollection, and he will allow the presence of emotions in the poem only if they offer cognitive results. The main problem of this essay is Ransom's terminology, which becomes so ambiguous and obscure that it is almost impossible to go through the meanderings of his explanations. The new poetic formula in which metaphor is the measurement of the quality of the poem is just another phase in the development of Ransom's analytical methods.

Ransom starts by contrasting Shakespeare's Sonnet LV with Donne's famous "Valediction: Of the Booke" in order to prove that Donne is much superior as a lyric poet to Shakespeare. He goes back again to define the metaphysical qualities of poetry, calling Shakespeare a "careless workman" who writes "a poetry of wonderful imprecision", but his main remark is the same as in his argument against T.S. Eliot: Ransom is against any mixture of emotions and cognitions in an "association of sensibility". Thus, Shakespeare is accused of associativism and psychologism, but the main reason why he could never be considered the great poet that Donne is is that he never developed consistently and logically the hard-wrought poetic forms of metaphysical conceits that Donne did. Precisely, Ransom says:

> The impulse to metaphysical poetry . . . consists in committing the feelings . . . to their determination within the elected figure. But Shakespeare was rarely willing to abandon his feelings to this fate, which is another way of saying that he would not risk the consequences of his own imagination. He censored these consequences, to give them sweetness, to give them dignity; he would go a little way with one figure, usually a reputable one, then anticipate the consequences, or the best of them, and take up another figure. (WB, pp. 286-287, see also previously 281, 278.)

On the other hand, Donne is in full control of his imagination, and his poems perform a *complete cognitive unity*. (*WB*, pp. 289, 291, 292, et passim.) As one can see, theoretically, there is hardly anything new here, so let us now see how Ransom performs in the real analysis.

The first objection he makes is that Shakespeare's sonnets are generally "ill-constructed". Ransom examines the metrical pattern of Shakespeare's sonnets and concludes that they do not follow the usual metrical pattern known for the English sonnet (ABAB CDCD EFEF GG), having three co-ordinate quatrains and a couplet which relates to the others collectively. On the contrary, Shakespeare very rarely respects the traditional model, and more often, against the rules, he uses "some arbitrary logical organization which clashes with it". Therefore, Shakespeare's model for the sonnet consists of three more or less loose quatrains and one undeveloped couplet, or sometimes the whole sonnet turns out to be simply and only a fourteen-line poem. This type of negligence irritates Ransom, who thinks that Shakespeare *should have reverted to the Italian sonnet*, (*WB*, p. 178) if the English model happened to be structurally too difficult to master.

Secondly, Ransom finds Shakespeare's imagery to be too *conventional* and *sweet*, closer to the poetry of feelings, which in Ransom's vocabulary is negatively described as subjective, sentimental and distastefully "romantic". According to Ransom, this sort of poetry consists of, and relies on, pretty words by which the poet pleases the reader, thus increasing the poem's associationist powers. One of the examples of associationist poetry is the stanza from sonnet XXXIII:

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
> Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
> Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy. (*WB*, pp. 279-280.)

In Ransom's interpretation, this is a typical example of "the failure of objectivity, or perhaps 'realism'". The sun is "weakly imagined; rather, it may be said to be only felt, a loose cluster of images as obscure as they are pleasant", and all in all, the whole stanza is "a mixed and self defeating figure", a loose romantic piece, furnished by the half-conscious memories attending the pretty words.

The third group of objections concerns Shakespeare's use of language. Ransom believes that Shakespeare's sonnets are full of "violence of syntax", free coinages, jargon and other abuses of language. He does not approve when Shakespeare makes a verb of the adjective "famous" in the line "The painful warrior famoused for fight" (Sonnet XXV), or when he uses fight, in the same line, as a qualitative noun. Neither does he like the series of adjectives in the line "The rich proud cost of outworn buried age" (Sonnet LXIV). All these, as well as punning, deliberate absurdities, word-play, ambiguities, etc., Ransom considers as defects common in romantic poetry; there is a great deal of "obscurity" which does not exist in the intellectualist or metaphysical poetry. (WB, p. 283.)

However, the worst type of complaints which could be addressed to Shakespeare's sonnets deals with a metaphysical conceit, i.e., metaphor. As was already shown in the example of the comparison of Donne's with Shakespeare's poetry, Ransom is convinced that Shakespeare is unable to achieve perfection even when working "within the metaphysical style", because "he is unwilling to renounce the benefit of his earlier style, which consisted in the breadth of the associations; that is, he will not quite risk the power of a single figure but compounds the figures". (WB, pp. 297 et passim.) In other words, Ransom's argument is that even in the case when Shakespeare's metrics, imagery and language are closest to the standards of metaphysical poetry, Shakespeare has still little chance of achieving the perfection of the effects of metaphysical poetry because of his treatment of metaphor. For example, there are sonnets technically perfect (LVII), with honestly realized metaphysical images (XXX), impressive lines (LX), or an even better metaphysical style is achieved in a few of the soliloquies such as those in Macbeth (Macbeth's famous speech "Tomorrow, and tomorrow . . .", in V, v) or in Antony and Cleopatra (Antony's speech after the defeat, in III, ix). However, in spite of that, Shakespeare could not compose that final and powerful touch because, "instead of presenting a figure [i.e. metaphor] systematically," he went on presenting "a procession of flight of figures". (WB, pp. 301, 302 et passim.)

As many scholars have already pointed out, it would be really hard to stay objective and agree with Ransom's arguments. His critique of Shakespeare was widely criticized and, in most of the cases, proven wrong; however, the main point is that, in his analysis, he made a category-mistake: he was judging Shakespeare's poetry by applying to it the standards of metaphysical poetry. In other words, to use M.H. Abrams' phrase, Ransom was extremely unfair towards Shakespeare because he read his poetry through the eyes of Donne. Even Brooks, in his attempts to defend Ransom, had to admit the poet's right to choose any creative technique which pleases him, regardless of what someone else might think about it.[79] The critic's domain should not go further than that, and he should not interfere with the poet's motivation and his reasons for the acceptance of one type of poetry instead of another. It seems that Ransom did not want to understand that, and his critique of Shakespeare is less successful than could have been expected. Based primarily on the critic's own taste, Ransom's analysis fails to convince the reader in its objectives and in its demonstrated techniques. The conclusions have been forced upon the reader because they had been made before the analysis had been started.

V. CONCLUSION

A General Estimate of Ransom as Critic

It is very difficult to say something objective about Ransom as a literary critic. The controversial nature and the plurality of the aspects of his criticism challenge everyone to take a side and be a judge according to the chosen directive, or according to personal preferences and beliefs. Ransom's criticism can be looked upon from many different perspectives, and there are too many things which the literary historians and critics either took for granted or inherited from earlier scholarship as never verified truths. For instance, obviously there is a difference between the historical and real significance of John Crowe Ransom as a New Critic, and as critic. Being a New Critic, his importance is much greater than that of being a critic. Historically, his influence and reputation had an enormous impact on the whole movement. However, as a literary critic, Ransom can be accused of many sins of commission, ranging from introducing his own reactionary political ideas into his criticism, to having an arbitrary, intolerant and preaching tone in his writings; and from having a philosophically untenable conception of literature, to manipulating everything and anything in order to justify the validity of his positions. Yet conflicts and contradictions between various teachings, theory and practice, or within the analysis itself are very common and ordinary phenomena.

Scholars have pointed out many academically intolerable errors and inaccuracies, such as incomplete definitions, no clear distinctions between poetry and poem, or between meter and rhythm; forcing a dualism and widening the separation of two things when a distinction is not needed (emotionalism and sentimentalism, concepts of reality, mind, knowledge, imagination, and so on), an overly broad terminology, etc. As is evidenced in many examples, one of the most intolerable things which the readers of Ransom's essays face is the obscurity of his language. In his constant attempts to meet some self-proclaimed philosophical requirements, and to be an all-inclusive scholar, Ransom created a home-made vocabulary which has been shown to be the main obstacle in properly understanding the real nature of his statements. Being a poet-critic, which means being naturally inclined to be more metaphorical than clear and logical, he created a monster-terminology which overpowers any traditional usage of terms. If nothing else, Ransom is responsible for at least two unforgivable misconducts: first, for creating controversial and dubious theories; and secondly for inventing a special terminology to cover them. Ransom's concepts are either very confusing, partly because their ambiguity is based on a very unusual and overly flexible use of language, or else their understanding is very limited due to a very narrow and too simplistic (or literal) use of previous theoretical concepts. Oversimplification, erroneous or understatement are qualifications used by critics to describe Ransom's deliberate adjustments and manipulations in theory and practice. His lack of originality is replaced by simple rearrangements and new terminology, sometimes even a reversing of the arguments is enough for Ransom to launch a new theory. Being the prophet of the movement is a more attractive role for Ransom than being the leader, thus he would do anything that is in his control to keep this idea working.

However, I do not wish to sound unfair by listing the deficiencies and imprecisions in Ransom's theory and practice. After studying the background of Ransom's terminology in regard to the development of his theories, one can see that both kinds of literary scholars, supporters and opponents as well, have done a great deal of injustice to Ransom. There are three basic types of misconceptions about the place and validity of Ransom's contribution to Anglo-American Criticism. The previous reputation of Ransom as a well-known poet and as spiritual leader of the movement has brought about some superficiality in approaching the real issue, and in finding out the real reasons for forming the major doctrines of the movement. Ransom was overpraised or underestimated so many times, without ever being scrutinized for the real motives behind the sources or the appearance of his theories. More often, the assumptions were made without anybody ever verifying them. For instance, there are assumptions about Ransom's Kantianism, which turns out rather to be a mixture of Hegelianism, Croceanism and Bergsonianism. Then critics talk about Russian Formalism, Neo-Romanticism or Neo-Classicism; but nobody touches on the American literary and philosophical tradition and Ransom's contemporaries. And, on top of all this, everyone overlooks completely the development of Ransom's ideas, and the differences between his earlier and later teachings, as well as his reading of Freud, and the changes in his views on metaphor and poetic structure.

Secondly, it seems to us that the critics were sometimes unfair in their treatment of Ransom as literary scholar, rather than simply as being a critic-poet. This must sound irrelevant, but the text of his essays shows over and over that Ransom's metaphorical style was not intended to hold the balance between his speculations and his analyses. The critics were simply misled by the great expectations and ambitions of the New Critics themselves. Instead of taking a purely academic approach, many of the New Critics, and Ransom is one of them, should be treated exclusively as critic-poets. More emphasis on the literary aspects of his essays, instead of on the scholarly accuracy or validity of his logical argumentations, would result in much more interesting conclusions about both Ransom and his views about poetry.

Thirdly, the matter of fact is that Ransom himself contributed better to his critical goal when he was not too subconscious about protecting or elaborating his theories. When acting free of any predispositions, Ransom was able to state some very dramatic truths about literature. Obviously, his theories became an unnecessary and unfortunate ballast in both his analyses and his views about writing poetry. Thus, this shows that there is a certain necessity for studying Ransom's literary interpretations separately from the views and position expressed in his theories, as was done here, in the three examples dealing with Milton's Lycidas, the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay and Shakespeare's sonnets.

In regard to his contribution to the movement, it must definitely be pointed out that, in spite of the fact that Ransom was not the first person to formulate certain doctrines or principles of the movement, his formulations were those most likely to be accepted by the others, particularly the three other Southerners (Brooks, Pen Warren and Tate). Secondly, in spite of another fact, that these principles differ from the major principles of the other New Critics, they remain a valid document for defining the area relevant to New Criticism. For example, here they are summarized again:

> A literary work exists autonomously as an aesthetic object.
>
> The main concern of the critic is to respect the autonomy and existence of a literary work as an aesthetic object.
>
> The poem consists of paraphrasable logical structure and irrelevant local texture; i.e., it exists as a tension between two poetic structures.
>
> Literature represents logically achieved experience which functions as the most complete kind of knowledge, the universal truth about the reality.
>
> The critic's job is to recreate and discover how the poet has achieved this representation of reality, but through the dissection of texture rather than by paraphrasing the logical structure.

As one can see, Ransom's five principles do not constitute a critical methodology for carrying out the analysis, but rather they define his critical attitude and aesthetic position. This is the main reason that it was possible for him to make them flexible enough to adapt to and accept many substitutions and changes over a long period of time.

CHAPTER TWO

CLEANTH BROOKS' LITERARY VIEWS ON ORGANICISM AND CONTEXTUALISM

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CLEANTH BROOKS' LITERARY VIEWS ON ORGANICISM AND CONTEXTUALISM

I. A Discussion of the New Critical Organicism

That the poem exists as an aesthetic object, all New Critics would agree to without too much dispute. The split starts when they go a step further trying to explain how this aesthetic existence is achieved, or how it functions in regard to other aesthetic or non-aesthetic objects. This means, in other words, that one of the central problems of New Criticism is still the relationship of the literary work to reality, or to other objects of reality, to be more precise. This has resulted in two major fractions of New Criticism: one led by Ransom, who sees the final cause of literature as in its gnoseological function, and the other, led by Empson, who sees literature as another form of communication. Unlike both representatives of the two branches of New Criticism, Cleanth Brooks does not see the conflict between the two kinds of referentialities of literature, nor does he create a third one by rejecting the initial two, as does Kenneth Burke. Burke gives some credit to Empson but in general he builds his doctrine of a symbolic action on premises which directly oppose any kind of referentiality, informativity or meaningfulness for literature. Brooks admits openly that his goal is to reconcile the two opposing and almost antagonistic poles of New Criticism: first based on the rejection of the Richardsian principles of criticism, formulated in the Ransomian view as a dispute between Richards and T.S. Eliot; and then based on the acceptance of the Richardsian interpretation of the theory of communication. This is adequately reflected in Brooks' writing in two different periods: the first one, which consists of his early writings in which he follows in the footsteps of the other New Critics, and the period of changes, when Brooks shows more interest in developing theories of his own or in clarifying the principles of his analyses, rather than in the need for defending New Critical beliefs.

The major doctrine of the early period is related to the problem of poetic structure, and it consists, more or less, of Brooks' variation on the concept of organic unity. The same concept appears in the later phase of Brooks' writing, but its significance will change drastically. At the very beginning, Brooks' Organicism grew naturally from his attempts to build a bridge between the New Critics' arguments with Richards and T.S. Eliot, and its primary function was to serve as the official, and the most reliable doctrine of the movement. Later on, when Brooks had already developed some of his own theories: i.e., the concepts of irony, paradox, paraphrase, etc., the organic theory of poetry, already being accepted by some New Critics such as A. Tate, R.P. Warren, W. Wimsat and partially by R. Blackmur, does not play any more a significant role as a weapon of defence against the attacks of his opponents; but it tends to be still very important in defining the individual or minor theories related to the practical analysis of literary texts, or to the essential definition of poetic structure. This issue of a proper definition of poetry or poem was never completely clarified by the New Critics. But in spite of that, the organic theory of poetry remains one of the most acceptable theories for most New Critics.

From a purely historical viewpoint, the significance of the early Organicism of Brooks might appear more important than his other theories. As a part of the New Critics' major polemics with their opponents, the New Critical Organicism has played an important role on the larger scale of their influence, particularly in Brooks' personal polemics which characterized his early writings. The polemical overtones were subdued later on, and the second period offers a different image of Brooks, who will be now better known as a practising critic rather than as a theoretician. Dealing now more with interpreting, rather than with theorizing, Brooks changes also his temper and behavior as a critic. The author would overpower the New Critic, and as a result Brooks would create his best known theories about irony, paraphrase, paradox, etc. At this time, the new concepts were needed to prove that the movement was still alive and, at the same time, Brooks became more independent, changing his views from being a great admirer of Ransom and T.S. Eliot to start sympathizing with Empson and Richards. He still did not too much like Richards' terminology, but he was now willing to accept his principles.[1]

1) The Historical Background of the New Critical Organicism

Organicism as a literary concept[2] has been differently formulated from its original, i.e., ancient Greek definition, based on Plato and Aristotle. First, the Classical Greek definition usually refers to the idea of form[3] as organic unity based on the relationship of the parts within the whole; and secondly, any alteration or change of this relationship will immediately bring about the alteration of the whole.

The first part of the definition was formulated by Plato, who paid more attention to the relationship among the elements as individual parts; the second part was formulated by Aristotle, who stressed the importance of the interrelationship and any change in regard to the whole. Classicism, romanticism and modern philosophical trends began introducing new foundations for these two basic organic preconditions, raising some new theoretical questions such as:

> Is it possible to speak about organic unity between form and content as two parts inseparable from the whole?
>
> Is it possible to separate the parts within the whole? If it is, what purpose is achieved in so doing? Does it mean that it is possible to isolate more important and relevant parts from secondary and not so important ones?
>
> If there is a certain rank or hierarchy among the elements of the whole, what purpose is there in "adding" irrelevant parts?

The ancient Organicism asks completely different kinds of questions, being more interested in the comparison of organic form with mechanical form.

For instance, in Theatetus and Phaedrus,[4] Plato stresses two important principles: first "The all is not the whole"; and secondly "There should be a middle, beginning and end adapted to one another and to the whole". In his Poetics,[5] Aristotle adds the third principle to the ancient Organicism: "The whole is prior to the parts". However, aside from these three important principles, the classical formula emphasizes most that the organic work of art has the same features as a living creature. This fourth principle sums up all the others, stating first: any organism consists of many organs which function only as the whole (head, heart, feet, etc.); secondly, the reference "beginning, middle and end" implies a life cycle, not the order of things; therefore, each organic work of art has its birth, growth from youth to maturity, and death. In other words, an organism differs from a mere mechanism or aggregate by its inner structure, which is based on the subordinate roles of parts which could not exist independently. A hand without a living body is no longer a hand; any part of a machine is the same part regardless whether its mechanism is working or stays motionless, in pieces.

Thus it is clear that in the classical interpretation of Organicism the idea of inner form is identical with the idea of organic unity, because the concept of totality or wholeness is implied in both. For Plato, organic unity consists of a multiplicity of parts being reduced to one, i.e., unity. The Platonic concept of the idea as the One and the Many existing at the same time receives its slightly different interpretation in Aristotle's distinction between the particulars and the universals which appear also as composite wholes. German idealistic philosophy solves the problem of the One and the Many under the categories of a priori and a posteriori unity, in the Kantian sense, or as a synthesis, in the Hegelian sense.

Later theoreticians objected to the ancient version of Organicism mainly because of this lack of any clear distinction between the concepts of inner form and organic unity. Aristotle applied the principle of organic unity only once, in his definition of plot as being more important than the characters,[6] but in general, ancient Organicists never focused their full attention to this matter. As a matter of fact, until Plotinus, the question of the predominance or validity of the parts in regard to the whole was never clarified and fully discussed. Plotinus argued with Plato who emphasized the individuality of the work of art, rejecting the partition and hierarchical rules of composition. Now many modern Organicists agree with Plato claiming that each literary work is individually effective, so that some of them can function, even if some of the parts are missing, while the others function only as a composite of the whole. Unlike Plato, Plotinus believed that the parts had to have the same characteristics as the whole in order to function properly within the whole: "The whole cannot be made up of ugly parts; the beauty must penetrate everything", says Plotinus in his Enneads,[7] referring to the fact that if the whole is beautiful, so must the parts be. Since he was closer to Aristotle on this issue, he compared the work of art with the human face, using the principles of the Poetics. This comparison rules out mere proportion and symmetry as preconditions for beauty, and emphasizes the synthesis of various parts on the principle of the Aristotelian concept of form, i.e., the functionality of each part to form the whole. This understanding of organic unity as the inner form was predominant among the rhetoricians and throughout the mediaeval period. Even Dante understood organic unity as being the question of the harmony of form "when the members duly answer each other."[8] During the Renaissance and Classicism, when the revived interest in Plato and Aristotle produced definitions of literature based on various definitions of the concepts of form and content, the separation of the concepts of inner form and organic unity went through a phase where these were no longer attributed especially to Organicism. As a matter of fact, the concept of many unities weakened the position of Organicism during the Classical period, in spite of certain attempts made to maintain the concept of "inner form" as one of the major organic precepts. For this reason, Boileau was citing Longinus; Herder and Goethe traditional Aristotelian concepts; and Shaftesbury Plotinus, etc.

The philosophic movement of the 18th Century was responsible once more for the revival of the organic idea, transforming the old principles of ancient Organicism in a more flexible and essentially very different way. Leibniz was the first to return the principles of Organicism in the discussion of various metaphysical and scientific problems. His contribution, basically best expressed in his theory of monads,[9] was so revolutionary that it inspired more than one generation of philosophers; starting with such classical German idealists as Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, and ending with the British pragmatist Ferdinand C.S. Schiller, and it included literary theoreticians of both persuasions: Classicists and Romanticists, Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, but also J.P. Richter, the brothers Schlegel, Tieck, and so on. The novelty of Leibniz' revolutionary approach lies in his discernment of the fact that systems of the whole also function as parts within other systems and, secondly, that the relationships of various wholes (i.e., parts) within one whole cannot properly be understood without the introduction of the concept of forces. Leibniz explains this by using the principle of monads. The function of monads, unitary or composite, is to form the system, i.e., the body. Everything that exists is composed of bodies or organisms which exist in other bodies or organisms, without end. Each body receives and projects various effects on other bodies according to the type of monads to which they originally belong. Monads organize the parts into the whole, reflecting what has been happening within specific bodies and defining their interrelationship. These relationships are based on two types of forces: first the forces of the monads, and secondly, the forces of particular bodies or "inner forms".

These forces create relationships which function as so-called "bonds of order", i.e. they might appear as harmony, beauty, etc. Their type of reflected reality depends on the type of monads, which can be simple or unitary, and complex or composed of many wholes. Both worlds, organic and non-organic, can be explained in terms of the relationship between the parts and the whole, even abstract forms such as time and space. However, abstract forms consist of substances, and concrete forms consist of monads and organisms, or bodies. Since there are different kinds of matter as well as forces: active, passive, motionless, dynamic, etc., Leibniz explains the principle of relationship between the parts and the whole quite separately from the question of organic unity or inner form. He says that in abstract forms the whole is prior to the parts, contrary to the situation of concrete forms in which the parts are prior to the whole. All these new explanations and quite original concepts of Organicism have become very important pretexts for the new approach to the Organic Theory in literature, particularly during the period of Romanticism.

Kant was not directly interested in Organicism, in spite of the fact that his aesthetics were used by the Romantics to recreate and reaffirm Organic ideas. He combined Aristotle and Hume in the idea of the priority of logical unity, but here Organicism is only implicit. However, in his Critique of Judgment (1790), using the principles of Leibniz's monadology, he made certain valuable distinctions between the organic and the mechanical. Like Leibniz, Kant has shown clearly that this difference was not based on the relationship between the parts and the whole, as was thought in the ancient aesthetics. First of all, says Kant, as different to mechanism, the parts of an organism have the ability to produce one another, repairing and reproducing themselves in case any one is out of order.[10] The same comparison applies also between art and nature. An artefact does not have the same quality of reproduction and self-healing as does nature. Therefore, the analogy between the two can be only metaphorical, not real. Regarding the ancient question of the relationship between the parts and the whole, the antithesis between the organic and the mechanical can be described as a difference between the two wholes; the organic one, in which "every part is reciprocally end and means"; and the mechanical one, in which the parts have strictly defined and operative functions.

With Schelling's System of Trancendental Idealism (1800),[11] Organicism goes back to art and aesthetics. The German Romantics were particularly fond of Schelling, using his antirationalism, his theory of knowledge, imagination, vitalism, and particularly his Organicism, with many other minor theories, in order to form the basic principles of Romanticism. Schelling's personal interest in the arts and his friendship with most of the writers of his time probably had some impact on his enormous popularity in the literary communities, because even his critique of Kant, who was generally accepted by all the Romantics, had its followers. As many others before him, he was also influenced by Leibniz's fascinating philosophy of monads, trying to adjust it to the principles of art. Therefore, he introduced two new concepts to the theory of Organicism: one related to his philosophy of the opposition between the negative and the positive; the other to his concept of the origins of the inorganic world, i.e., life as the basis for the inorganic, rather than for the organic world.

According to Schelling, the main difference between a work of art and an organism is that where art is concerned, intelligence is for the first time completely selfconscious. Using his intelligence, the artist creates the world by contemplating nature and ordering its history. As primarily a productive activity, art is free from abstractions, as opposed to philosophy, which depends on them. However, as the final product of this activity, any individual work of art is unconscious, infinite and unlimited. That is to say, the artist never fully understands his art. He is even able to create true philosophy, but his lack of theoretical knowledge prevents him from understanding his creation or from being a philosopher. This example belongs to the so-called philosophy of opposition between the negative and the positive poles. According to Schelling, the two poles are art and the world of art, because there is a contrast between art being a conscious productive activity and the work of art as being the unconscious knowledge or presentation of a thing. On the contrary, the organisms are the result of an unconscious activity, which manifests itself in producing a finite and limited form. In other words, an organism is a finite and limited product, but, in comparison with a work of art, it is based on a hidden way of organizing the intelligence. Therefore, the relationship beween an organism and art is also an example of the opposition between the negative and the positive, which brings the work of art closer to the organism as both contrast to the conscious activities of the intelligence. Schelling's concept of intelligence cannot be understood without considering his theory of knowledge. Combining Kantian principles of experiencing the world of objects with the Fichtean concept of ego, Schelling arrived at the idea of consciousness being the only object about which we have an immediate and firsthand knowledge. Consciousness or self-activity in a limited form has three different stages: progressing from sensation to perception, from perception to reflection and from reflection to will. Practically, the difference between will and intelligence is only relative because both, according to Schelling, represent the highest stage of consciousness.

Aside from Schelling's philosophy of knowledge and his concepts of will, imagination and consciousness, the Romantics also accepted his philosophy of nature or, in his terminology "the philosophy of identity", in opposition to his "philosophy of opposition between the negative and the positive", which is essentially pantheistic: nature, universe, God and matter are one, and they need conscious activity, i.e., knowledge, to be identified; but their unity is inseparable in spite of the fact that their identities are distinguishable one from another. A similarly paradoxical parallel is made in his comparison between art and the individual work of art: in its totality art is a conscious activity, but a work of art is an unconscious activity. That is because the former needs comprehension, i.e., active consciousness, unlike the latter, which needs unconscious activity for its creation. Schelling uses this type of thinking in his famous assertion that inorganic matter originates in life. Contrary to the usual beliefs, Schelling claims that the world, Nature and Life, started as the organic matter from which inorganic objects were later created. Therefore organisms are prior to rocks, water, minerals. Schelling's concept of unity in complexity, and of simplicity coming from multiplicity, had a powerful impact on all later philosophers and literary theoreticians. The brothers Schlegel brought his terminology to literature, accepting most of his theories. The opposition of the negative and the positive had its impact on Hegel's dialectics and on his understanding of the organic unity of the poem. Benedetto Croce adopted Schelling's intellectual intuition as the precondition for art, making the concept of dynamic form the precondition for his version of organic unity. In his Aesthetics,[12] Croce says that the quality of the parts is determined by the whole, and the quality of the fusion determines their organic unity. The fusion of the parts is effected by the author's choice of form and directly depends on his intellectual intuition, i.e., imagination. It is hard to believe that someone has ever had the same impact as Schelling without ever being properly recognized or even read.

German Romanticism in general, and the brothers Schlegel in particular, were responsible for the diffusion of Schelling's ideas. August Schlegel's lecture on drama, and his analysis of Shakespeare in particular, have shown that the neo-classical concepts of unities were pure mechanical forms. Friedrich Schlegel's contribution was in his reaffirmation of Schelling's teaching on imagination. Thus, the Schlegels completely accepted the organic theory of literature, claiming that real art should possess inner form, organically developed from within and so dictating an outward arrangement according to the subject-matter.

However, the fundamental change in the Romantic interpretation of the four basic principles of Organicism came with the change in the comparison of a work of art with a "living creature". Unlike Classical Greek Organicism which compares it with an animal, the Romantics prefer the comparison in which the work of art is compared with a plant or tree. Secondly, the Romantics were generally against the idea of the parts being equal within the whole. According to the list of M.H. Abrams, five principles of the Romantic version of organic form are summarized here:[13]

1) the WHOLE: the priority of the whole against the parts; without the whole the parts are insignificant;

2) GROWTH, which is manifested in the "evolution and extension of the plant";

3) ASSIMILATION: through its roots the plant converts different material into a new substance;

4) INTERNALITY: the plant is the spontaneous source of its own energy; it is shaped from the inner form by the forces within;

5) INTERDEPENDENCE: exists between parts and parts, as well as between the parts and the whole; between the whole and the most important parts.

Later on, Coleridge, Richards and the New Critics introduced the sixth principle of organic form, formulating it as: tension and reconciliation of manifold opposites in the poetic structure.[14]

Organicism has played a very different but significant role in the Anglo-American literary tradition. First of all, and unlike their European literary counterparts, Anglo-American theoreticians confuse the term "formalism" with "Organicism"; or they equalize the use of the terms "formalistic", "formal" and "organic", using them as synonyms. Secondly, the native English speaker uses a quite different connotation in mentioning the word "organic" than does the speaker of some other language. His first reference tends to be "to organize" something rather than to understand something as being functional, i.e., a connotation deriving from the relationship of "organs" towards "organisms" as parts towards the whole. Thus, this ordinary usage of the word "organic" prevails even in those cases when the historical meaning of literary tradition supports or recommends a more specific and precise usage of the term. This is the main reason that modern English dictionaries of technical terms for the humanities still do not include the proper meaning for the concepts deriving from "Organicism".[15]

Speaking in strictly literary terms, Coleridge and the Romantics were the most responsible for the reason why the New Critics also had a different conception of Organicism from their predecessors or contemporaries. Coleridge's version of Organicism is based on the following principles:[16]

1) "The sense of beauty consists in the simultaneous intuition of the relation of parts, each to each, and of all to the whole".

2) Organic unity is in multiplicity which appears in different forms as the unity of contraries, disparates or even opposites.

3) The Imagination is the inner force, the "esemplastic" power which functions as the unifying factor for all parts and for the whole.

In criticizing Richards' Affective theory, the New Critics turn to the Romantics to borrow from them their teachings about imagination, intuitive experience, about literature as knowledge, and in particular about the predominant role of certain poetic devices within the poetic whole: metaphor, irony, or ambiguity as the central element. Thereby, the poetic whole is in many cases replaced by the more general idea of poetic language. This drastic detour was necessary because of the disagreement among the New Critics concerning the definition of the poem, which was usually considered either as experience or as communication. Both definitions have their foundation in the comparison of the characteristics of the poetic language with prose language, Ransom and Brooks seeing poetic language as an extension of reality, Empson seeing the plural significance of the poetic language as the extension of human communication beyond the boundaries of language.

2) Cleanth Brooks' Views on Organicism

a) Organicism Seen as Formalism

In spite of the popularity of the concept of organic unity in their writings, the New Critics generally have had very unclear ideas and mixed feelings about the proper definition of Organicism. For instance, even at the time when the whole issue became totally irrelevant because the movement was at its end, William K. Wimsatt ironically answered his opponents by saying: "What are the beginning, middle and end of a squirrel or a tree? . . . What corresponds to the stomach in a tragedy?".[17] Obviously, he either ignores the real meaning of the original metaphor, or he does not know that Plato's reference to the organs, or "beginning, middle and end", is not a reference to physiology or time but to the functionality of the organs as the parts within the whole, and to the fact of the life-cycle of living creatures being an evolutionary process. Wimsatt's questions are indeed addressed to those who objected to the New Critics' Organicism, and his main idea is to confound their detractors. But somehow his replies show that he does not have completely clear ideas about the main differences between mechanical and organic form. There is indeed a certain symbolism in the ancient metaphor which compares the work of art to the human body, and the followers of Platonic Organicism are not so far apart from the followers of Pythagorean aesthetics, for both celebrate the human body as the epitome of beauty, harmony, proportion, order and symmetry. But when the classical Organicist speaks about organs, he refers to the complex system of symbols and legends which explain the functionality of each according to their mythological role and context. Religion was not only a part of everyday life, but also a very important part of the arts. This is still reflected in Plato's theory. Therefore, when Plato compares a work of art to the human body, he still remains within the framework of the principles of Pythagorean mechanical formalism. However, when he speaks about the human body as an organism, he breaks with tradition and refers now to the functionality of each particular organ within the body as the whole; therefore, his new metaphor no longer implies the characteristics of a mechanical form: he refers now to the organic form as so-called "inner" form.

Even Brooks, who was the first New Critic, jointly with R.P. Warren, to pose the question of organic unity as the central problem in interpreting poetry, was still uncertain about the differences between the mechanical and the organic form. As early as 1932 and 1934, when he outlined his first essays on metaphor, which were to be published later on in his own book Modern Poetry and the Tradition (1939),[18] Brooks came out with the idea of organic unity in reading Coleridge and Richards. The idea gradually developed into the complex theory of organic poetry, starting first with textbooks which taught students how to analyze poem. However, if we compare these first writings on Organicism, we can easily see that the same dilemma and inconsistency which exist in Brooks, who was a real propounder of New Critical Organicism, would reappear in the writings of Wimsatt.

Brooks' understanding of Organicism goes in a quite unorthodox direction. Not only because he offers quite non-traditional explanations for the organic poetic structure, but because he also uses rather unusual concepts to explain organic unity, which he understands as the unifying factor, or the quality of one particular element within the whole. Being unable to distinguish clearly between the mechanical and the organic form, which is quite evident from his three different definitions of the poetic structure, he reduces the organic structure to the unifying force of one particularly important part; either it is metaphor, imagery, symbols; or, later on, wit, irony or paradox. As a matter of fact, Brooks mentions the ancient concept of inner form only once, in spite of the fact that he deals very often with problems of tension or conflict within the elements of the whole.

Unlike his other theoretical concepts, Brooks' concept of Organicism is very ambiguous and changeable. During the long period of his career as a scholar and literary critic, Brooks has changed his view only in regard to organic unity and the communicative role of poetry (cf. his later teaching about paraphrase in which he opposes his early beliefs related to poetic meaning), which is probably one of the reasons that he prefers to call his kind of criticism "formalism" rather than Organicism.[19]

In order to properly understand Brooks' reasons it is necessary to first refer to his famous manifesto-essay "My Credo: The Formalist Critic" (1951),[20] which sums up the main principles of the New Criticism. At the very top of the list of Brooks' articles of faith is the statement that the primary concern of criticism should be to deal with the problem of organic unity. However, Brooks offers a quite unusual explanation for his version of organic unity, trying to base his concept on the relationship between meaning and form: cf. "form is meaning", "literature is metaphoric and symbolic". If we add to this his explanation of poetic structure in his early writings Understanding Poetry and Modern Poetry and the Tradition, which say that the organic unity of the poem should be understood as the patterned whole whose main function is in communicating to the reader, we may clearly conclude that Brooks sees organic unity as the reconciliation of the traditionalist concept of "the meaning of the form" with the concept of "the meaning of the content". In other words, in Brooks' version of Organicism, the main focus is on the "message" which is conveyed by form rather than that conveyed by content. This will be rejected first in the essay "What Does Poetry Communicate?":

> The poem communicates so much and communicates it so richly and with such delicate qualifications that the thing communicated is mauled and distorted if we attempt to convey it by any vehicle less subtle than that of the poem itself.[21]

The very same idea which appears here as the heresy of communication, and it is part of Brooks' semantic theory of poetry, will be properly elaborated and extended in the heresy of paraphrase.[22] However, it here functions to explain both the semantic dimension of organic unity and the semantics of the poem as a whole. According to Brooks' interpretation then, it would be false to believe that any part of the whole can be representative of the poem as a whole; and the idea of paraphrase is a practical impossibility, because the poem does not communicate anything; it is being communicated itself.

This question of form being meaning and, at the same time, the poem being unparaphrasable has been seriously challenged by Kenneth Burke.[23] In spite of his acceptance of two other principles of Brooks' formalism, the problem of organic unity which Burke understands as the inner form, and of criticism being description and evaluation (which is not a real formalist concept) Burke could not go further and accept either the semantic explanation of both concepts of form and organic unity, nor accept that the concept of organic unity is the central problem in discussing poetic structure. According to Burke, the notions of form and meaning are not complementary but mutually exclusive. For example, the notion of form is defined by its complexity, and it cannot be reduced to its single units. This is quite opposite to the concept of meaning, which is defined by its singularity, and its particularity is manifested through the duality of its functioning, as the meaning of specific units and the meaning of the whole, i.e., the meaning of metaphors, symbols, etc., and the meaning of the poem. Therefore, Burke concludes, it would be a methodological fallacy to equalize different manifestations of form, which are progressive, repetitive, conventional, and so on, with different appearances of meaning, in symbols, image, and so forth. Moreover, regardless of the fact that Brooks is maybe right in believing that a poet is naturally closer to his poem than his readers can ever hope to be, he is definitely wrong in being unable to see that by comparing all available contexts (both poetic and extra-poetic), we can get deeper glimpses than were otherwise possible.[24] Accordingly, the organic unity is not the key to open all kinds of doors, in spite of its high level of importance in constructing the poem. Burke is particularly keen about Brooks' attempts to reconcile the Richardsian principle of literature as being communication with the Ransomian, or even Eliot's principle which says that literature conveys more than any other kind of discourse: it conveys the truth. Burke quite rightly saw the contradiction in the whole idea of literature as being a statement which cannot be restated; he rejects both solutions offered by Richards and Ransom, saying that "to consider language as a means of information or knowledge is to consider it epistemologically, semantically, in terms of 'science'". His vision of poetry and its difference from other kinds of discourse is based on his idea of the poem being a mode of action, a symbolic act made by the poet, but an act of such a nature that it enables us as readers to re-enact it.[25]

b) Three Definitions of Poetic Structure

On three different occasions Brooks made three different metaphorical definitions of the poem as organic unity. The first time was in his Understanding Poetry (1938); again in "The Poem as Organism: Modern Critical Procedure" (1940), and thirdly in "Irony as a Principle of Poetic Structure" (1949).[26] Let us now compare these three definitions. Because Robert Penn Warren was later to disagree with Brooks about the function of organic unity and its unifying elements, I will assume the views on this subject-matter to be more or less Brooks' rather than Warren's, in spite of the fact that Understanding Poetry was written jointly by both authors. According to the first definition, the poem is not "merely a bundle of things that are 'poetic' in themselves, or a group of mechanically combined elements . . . put together as bricks to make a wall". The authors' statement is indeed very firm: "If we must compare a poem to the make-up of some physical object, it ought to be not a wall but something organic like a plant" (UP, p. 11). However, the crucial argument of this comparison is still that "the poem, in its vital unity, is a 'formed' thing, having its special identity" which makes us "more aware of life outside" (op. cit., p. 12).

In other words, this means that the definition of the poem as the organic whole, which appears in Understanding Poetry, reflects primarily the authors' understanding of poetic structure as the organic unity of various parts, rather than of the whole depending on "inner" form. Obviously, the authors do not make any effort to explain how and why one should accept the claim that the poetic structure ought to be organized organically, or what then is the major difference between the organic and the mechanical whole, appearing as form, structure, or organized material. From the explanation offered by Brooks and Warren, it is clear that the authors understand the relationship of the elements as being based on the poet's solution to present or realize his creative intentions, rather than on the inner functionality of the parts within the whole. Brooks and Penn Warren constantly omit discussing the differences between the mechanical unity and the organic unity; also they fail to point out why, in a particular situation, the organization of the elements happens to be organic. Their preoccupation with the concept of organic unity as the main characteristic of poetic structure overshadows their consideration of other problems related to Organicism and the definition of the poem as the whole. This occurs even in the concrete analyses of the various poetic texts. Usually, the authors start their analysis with the warning that all parts of the whole have the same status, and accordingly, that the potential critic should not search for certain elements more "poetic" or "pleasing", or "agreeable", or "valuable" than the others. For instance, in analyzing a passage from Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida, the authors are ready to say that the question of elements being "poetic" is rather irrelevant because, in a particular situation, everything depends on whether they work "with the other elements to create the effect intended by the poet". Both Brooks and Penn Warren were to reject this position in their later books, but at this point they also supported another concept unusual for the New Criticism: in addition to their acceptance of the psychological approach to the poet's intentions, i.e., everything depends on the effects intended by the poet, the authors also accepted the concept of the so-called "dominant". Precisely, they said:

> The picture is poetically good because it accurately indicates the attitude which Ulysses wishes Achilles to take toward his past achievements. . . . The use of images in this passage, then, represents not only a close-knit organization because of the relation of the images to each other and to the intention of the passage, but also a psychological development, for the images lead from one attitude and state of mind to another. One can show the closeness of the organization of the passage even in the use of a single word. For example, take the word monumental in the last line. A great deal of the "meaning" is concentrated in this one word. (UP, p. 62)

Following this passage comes the author's final conclusion that a potential critic "must consider not the elements taken in isolation, but in relation to the total organization and intention". Obviously, there is a certain contradiction between the statement which claims that there is "a great deal of 'meaning' concentrated" in the word monumental, and the claim that the elements should not be "taken in isolation" one from another. There are two major objections to this thinking: first, if one tends to accept the Organicistic rule that the whole is prior to the parts, then the concept of one word being more dominant because of its meaning becomes self-excluding; and again, if the "closeness of the organization" of the elements is manifested through the intentions of the poet, and is carried out by the concentration of the meaning in one single word, that also excludes the possibility for organic concepts of poetry. Because, as the major principles say, the whole must be prior to the parts; the meaning can be manifested only as the whole; the meaning of elements isolated from their functions within the whole is therefore irrelevant, as well as is the significance of the poet's intentions in regard to any of the elements within the whole, or to the whole itself, etc.

The contradictory elements in Brooks' understanding of organic unity are even more evident in his second discussion of this matter, which appears in "The Poem as Organism: Modern Critical Procedure" (1941). In addition to the previously mentioned problem of "dominant", Brooks' concern is here with the problem of truth, and with the problem of the mechanical form which is confused with the organic one. His argumentation is built on the following premises:[27]

1) "The concept of the poem as an organism should display itself in a renewed respect for the power and independence of words. Words cannot be ordered about or deployed perfectly and uniformly. . . . Mathematical symbols submit themselves to this ordonnance. . . . The words themselves set up a resistance to the poet's will." (pp. 30-31)

2) "I am sure that we can better understand certain buildings if we read a biography of the architect and better understand a bridge if we have read the diary of the engineer who built it. But in order to understand the building or the bridge it is more important still for one to understand architecture. If we think of a poem as a fabric with a unity of its own - an architecture in which stresses are balanced against each other and internal strains are reciprocated - if we think of a poem in these terms, we shall be merely exploring another metaphor, but it is a very valuable metaphor for the purposes of criticism." (p. 36)

3) "To conceive of a poem as an organism is indeed to take the only approach from which to attack the problem of imaginative unity. In emphasizing this approach modern criticism has made its greatest contribution."[27] (p. 37)

The first argument has its foundation in the Neo-Platonic discussion which the neo-classic critics entertained with the Romantics: poetry is defined as an imperfect science, imperfect philosophy, and so forth, in which the poet cannot consciously will or control his expression of the truth. According to Coleridge, whom Brooks quotes often from

Richards' commentaries, the imaginative unity is a mystical process which cannot deliberately be recreated by the critic. Brooks accepts this as a starting point for his theory of paraphrase; as well he accepts some of the arguments of the neo-classical critics, such as the one that literature is a symbolic or metaphoric representation of reality, rather than a pure imitation or emotional reflection of truth. The idea of resisting forces within the words themselves is taken from the Romantics, and it will serve perfectly to create his theories of irony, paradox, multiple meanings, and so on.

In the second argument, which consists of the famous comparison of the poem with a bridge, Brooks misplaces his point and confuses the structure of a bridge with an organic structure because its elements are balanced against each other on the basis of their internal strains and reciprocal forces. From the explanation which follows, it becomes clear that Brooks is actually talking about the mechanical or neo-classical ideal of form, particularly when he describes the main characteristic of organic unity as the totality of meanings without ever mentioning how the total context operates as the organism. Moreover, the organic unity is rather called "imaginative unity", and its characteristics are defined on the basis of their differences with the logical unity. The third argument makes it clear that the task of the critic is to explore only the imaginative unity. Obviously, here Brooks introduces again the difference between science and poetry, or, in other words, the difference between ordinary discourse, prose, and poetic discourse, i.e., literature.

It took Brooks nine years to return again to the discussion of organic unity, now for the first time defining the poetic structure organized on the principle of the inner form. His essay "Irony as a Principle of Poetic Structure" (1949), represents one of the most important essays in Brooks' theory and marks a new shift in his thought.[28] Apart from its function in clearing up many ambiguities and confusions in the early writings, this essay serves the purpose also of offering the most definitive description of Brooks' concepts of unity and poetic structure, and of introducing the analytical notion of irony. Here is that famous definition of poetry:

> . . . The elements of a poem are related to each other, not as blossoms juxtaposed in a bouquet, but as the blossoms are related to the other parts of a growing plant. The beauty of the poem is the flowering of the whole plant and needs the stalk, the leaf, and the hidden roots . . . the poem is like a little drama. The total proceeds from all elements in the drama, and in a good poem, as in good drama, there is no waste motion and there are no superfluous parts.[29]

For the first time Brooks obeys the rules of the traditional concept of Organicism by making the references to a plant as a living organism, and to the functionality of the parts which cannot exist independently. The comparison between the bouquet and the flowering of the growing plant shows definitely that, for the first time, Brooks sees organic unity in connection with the forces of the inner form; for example, by his reference to the "hidden roots" as a distinct characteristic which is missed in the bouquet, and of the functionality of the parts, on the Aristotelian principle that the whole is prior to the parts. The comparison of the poem with "a little drama" is borrowed from Burke, but Brooks' intention here is to emphasize the functionality of the parts within the whole, "no superfluous parts", he says; rather than to compare the poem with the structure of drama, which Burke uses for the purposes of his theory of symbolic action. The relationship of the parts is indeed still based on the total effect which proceeds from all elements, but for the first time Brooks understands that this is neither the only nor the main characteristic of organic unity. The detailed discussion of the function of each particular element of the poetic structure which follows from this third definition of poetry prepares the ground for Brooks' most popular concept, the concept of Irony.

II. EARLY PERIOD:

Brooks' Understanding of Poetic Structure through the Concepts of Wit and Metaphor

In his earliest independently written book Modern Poetry and the Tradition (1939), besides repeating some basic principles from Understanding Poetry, Brooks introduced a few new concepts which would later become the skeleton for his best known theories and analytical methods. In spite of very broad aspirations at the time, for Brooks' main ambition in his first book was to reevaluate the whole history of English poetry, this major achievement did not match his great expectations. Theoretically still heavily dependent on the critical concepts and taste of his mentors, T.S. Eliot and Ransom, Brooks indeed attempted to build the bridge between the two poles of his subjects of admiration, 17th and 20th century poetry. However, skipping over most of the poets of the late 17th century, and completely ignoring the entire 18th century and most of the achievements of the 19th century, Brooks' rewritten history of English poetry consists of praising Donne and the Metaphysicals on the one hand (including also only Ben Jonson and Herrick), and T.S. Eliot, Pound, Yeats, Hardy, and so on, on the other. Trying to find a balance between Eliot's concept of tradition, the demand of Ransom's theory of literature as knowledge, Brooks did not have too much choice but to accept both their taste and their limitations. Therefore, even his new concepts, which were being introduced for the first time, suffer from the same deficiency. For instance, even the concept of "wit" which Brooks uses as a base for his premises for the distinction between good and bad poetry, represents only a strange adaptation of Richards' way of thinking of the literary concepts of Ransom and T.S. Eliot. In other words, sharing his taste with T.S. Eliot, Tate and Ransom, and the opinion about the importance of metaphor with Richards, Empson and the others, accordingly Brooks defines the concept of wit as the most important ingredient of poetry. Often this was to result in sudden changes of the polarity of Brooks' attention being focused on one or another branch of the New Criticism, in spite of his efforts not to express any personal preferences for either idea. This is not a part of any unwillingness to make judgments; on the contrary, Brooks is more often very critical about his colleagues; but rather it is Brooks' desire to be more objective and independent in making final conclusions. Even when it seems that he follows too closely in the footsteps of his predecessors or contemporaries, there is the same line of neutrality in Brooks' opinions. He indeed echoed the official line of the majority of the New Critics, particularly those from the South, but more often his theorizing represents an attempt to see the problems from one particular angle, rather than an effort to please his fellow-members of the movement. His sense of loyalty to the movement was unquestionable and sometimes so extreme that it would cause him to adjust most of his theories in order to accommodate himself to what he believed was for the benefit of all the New Critics. But this was more a part of Brooks' strategy for fighting enemies and an enormous number of his personal critics. Later on, when he was to abandon the polemics writing mostly for his own professional satisfaction, Brooks was able to direct his attention to more concrete and crucial aspects of criticism. Similarly, as in the case of his polemics, Brooks' first independently made concepts went through the same type of evolutionary changes. Depending on their specific functions in the scope of Brooks' theoretical system, most of his concepts directly respond to the purpose which they serve at one specific period in his critical career. In other words, the development of Brooks' critical system depends very much on the purpose and role which his polemics and theoretical concepts have played in their historical context, as well as within the context of the development of the concepts of the other New Critics. Therefore, when one wants to speak about Brooks' concept of poetic structure, it is evident that one is forced to take into account the following two aspects of the problem: first, the two-fold role of the concept's functioning in its historical context and in relationship to the concepts of the other New Critics, and then the significance of the concept's role in the scope of Brooks' critical system and its development. This means in practice three different approaches to studying the problem: the first one being designed as two subdivisions which could be separated completely, and the last one as already meant to be taken independently, but usually the importance of the latter, or the final one, prevails.

Brooks' Concept of Poetic Structure: A General Overlook

The earliest works of Brooks, such as "The Reading of Modern Poetry" (1937), and the two books Understanding Poetry (1938) and An Approach to Literature (1941),[30] were joint efforts written with Robert Penn Warren. Since the principle of organic unity played an important role in these works, poetic structure is defined first as a coherent and functional whole. The explanation of the whole would lead naturally to the discussion of the content of the whole, which in the authors' interpretation was two-fold: consisting of meter, diction, metaphor, images, symbolic patterns and so on, on the one hand; and on the other hand, of conflict-elements, which the authors describe at first as inner forces, or tensions, attitudes or complex-situations, but which later Brooks calls wit, irony, paradox, ambiguities or simply "meanings". However, this dualistic approach, which is obviously the result of their respect for Ransom, is replaced sometimes with a more Richardsian approach. For instance, later editions of Understanding Poetry, or Brooks' own early books show that the principle of organic unity refers to the patterned whole, i.e., all symbolic patterns such as metaphors, images, symbols, etc., but terms such as conflict-elements or conflict-structures are reserved to describe the unifying elements or modifying forces within the whole. Therefore, the finally approved concept of poetic structure, which will be accepted by both authors and carried on in their own books with only a slight difference, is a typical Richardsian one. Here the concept of poetic structure is completely defined by the concepts of the complex of attitudes which represents the common denomination for all elements of the whole, and by conflict-structures which describe the individual functioning and particularity of each element or a group of elements which act together.

Since Brooks' understanding of poetic structure went through the same type of changes, his concept depends very much on the gradual development of all related concepts and their eventual replacement or reformulation at the time of writing.[31] One might find this variety of critical terms and concepts unnecessary and confusing, particularly when the same principles are used to define many different notions. For instance, in formulating his concepts of wit, irony and paradox, Brooks uses the function of metaphor as the basis for all three varying concepts; therefore, one must wonder if this is not simply a gradual or evolutionary process in the development of only one single notion having three different phases. Although this might be true in the case of wit, irony and paradox, the concept of poetic structure should not be reduced to the concept of organic unity, despite the natural ties and similarities that exist between these two concepts. In our opinion, there are a few very valid reasons why these two concepts should be kept apart: first of all, it is obvious from so many examples in his theory and practice that Brooks' discussion of organic poetry does not necessarily lead towards the discussion of the nature of poetic structure, e.g., Brooks uses the concept of organic unity in his polemics, or when he needs to defend certain types of poetry; and secondly, when Brooks' discussion of the concept of organic unity leads towards the explanation of poetic structure, his attention is usually limited only on focusing on what the poetic structure is not, rather than on what it really is. Overstressing more the differences between the mechanical and the organic form, instead of defining properly what the inner form is, Brooks very rarely discusses the real problems of poetic structure. Since he was rather confused at the very beginning about the proper definition and functioning of the parts within the whole, Brooks was unable adequately and consistently to use Richards' terminology, a problem which forced him either to invent a completely new terminology or to retain it with a somewhat changed sense of meaning.

Finally, Brooks' interests are directed more or less towards the results of reading poetry. Therefore, he would very often completely ignore many important aspects that are directly related to the complexity of the poetic analysis; aside from wit, irony and paradox, Brooks very seldom discusses anything else. Therefore, his interpretations of poetry suffer from the same lack of complexity as do the interpretations of the opponent that he criticizes. This critical monism does not coincide with the changes in the development of Brooks' theoretical doctrines. The big shift in Brooks' views on the organic theory of poetry which started with the introduction of the concept of irony, and which was accompanied by a new, reformulated definition of organic structure, was not followed by an immediate change in his analytical methods. Brooks' tendencies towards critical monism were always present in his writing in one form or another. Thus, one might conclude that the new concepts did not always mean a big change in Brooks' approach to literature, but that they rather meant a new direction in approaching problems previously discussed. Consequently, one might say that however important it is to respect the chronological development of gradual and evolutionary changes in Brooks' understanding of poetry, almost the same importance is to be attached to the explanations of his theoretical concepts within the scope of their individual significance as tools for practical analysis. Therefore, when the need occurs, we will emphasize one approach or the other in our discussion of these concepts, leaving aside such controversial issues such as the possibility of discussing the concept of wit as an earlier version of the later concepts of irony and paradox.

The Function of Metaphor and Wit in Early Theories

In the opening essay of Modern Poetry and the Tradition, entitled "Metaphor and Tradition",[32] Brooks states two preconditions for distinguishing between or for finding common features between different types of poetry: good and bad, Classical and Romantic, Modern and 17th century, and so on. These preconditions are as follows:

> 1) "It is highly important to understand the fundamental function of figurative language if we are to do justice to poetry which insists upon the imaginative process, as opposed to that poetry which merely makes agreeable, high-sounding propositions, or which merely mentions 'beautiful' objects". (MPT, p. 17)
>
> 2) "The significant relationship between the modernist poets and the seventeenth-century poets of wit lies here - in their common conception of the use of metaphor. . . . The significant relationship is indicated by the fact that the metaphysical poets and the modernists stand opposed to both the neoclassical and Romantic poets on the issue of metaphor". (Ibid., p. 11)

The first precondition obviously implies the Coleridgean distinction between Fancy and Imagination, as well as Brooks' favorite statement that there are not poetic things per se, and nothing can be said to be intrinsically unpoetic (cf. Understanding Poetry, previously discussed). The explanation of the second statement is based on the echoes of Richards' and T.S. Eliot's opinions, and their commentaries on the Romantic poets. Since he gave few additional examples of metaphor, concluding that it had to be a fundamental part of poetic discourse, Brooks finds himself in the position of following in the footsteps of Richards' and T.S. Eliot's commentaries on the Romantics. As regards Coleridge, Brooks sharply criticizes the theories of Wordsworth and Addison for their condemnation of intellectual poetry as being intrinsically unpoetic and opposed to the truly poetic one, i.e., the emotional type of poetry. Furthermore, criticism supporting the emotional type of poetry fails to distinguish between good and bad types of poetry, which should be discussed on the basis of the distinction between two usages of metaphor: as a *contrast* and as a *comparison*. Like Eliot, who favors comparisons, Brooks explains the concepts of *contrast* and *comparison* using Coleridge's distinction between Fancy and Imagination.

First of all, metaphor should be considered *in relation to the total context*, and its effectiveness should be judged upon its functionality within the poetic structure. The function of contrast is to illustrate, or decorate or ennoble the subject (like Fancy), as opposed to the function of comparison which is to intensify "the poet's *making*" (like Imagination). Brooks understands this "making", i.e., poetry as "building a more precise sort of language" than the dictionaries contain. By *playing off the connotations against denotations*, poets are *remaking the language*, which has a greater deal of *accuracy than is ordinarily attained* (*MPT*, p. 16). Everything that the poet wants to emphasize and his entire attitude are "stated by the metaphor, and only by the metaphor". Therefore, *the comparison is the poem in a structural sense*, and a good comparison is one which is *natural and new*. (*MPT*, pp. 16, 15, and 7)

Accordingly, the definition of good poetry follows the same pattern, and Metaphysical and Modern poetry are superior by comparison to the other types of poetry because they represent "the play of intellect and the play of wit". Wit is a pure work of the will and implies both thought and feeling, "a leisure and self-possession" also, according to Coleridge. Favoring wit, Brooks opposes Arnold's dismissal of that poetry which lacks "high seriousness" in order to favor the poetry which deals with "a beautiful world". In addition to his previously made statement that there should not be any restrictions on the part of poetic subjects, Brooks insists on the role of wit as the universal modifying and unifying element in poetic structure. Thus, good poetry is a poetry of wit and functional metaphors. Like Eliot, Brooks will use similar adjectives to describe the differences between the Neo-Classical and the Romantic model of poetry, or to point out the qualities of Modern poetry and Metaphysical poetry. For instance, Romantic poetry is "without clever ingenuity"; it is "overly emotional", "not intellectually calculated" (Eliot would say "fragmentary", "immature", "chaotic"); as opposed to Modern or Metaphysical poetry which is "arch", "mature", "adroit" and "graceful" (in Eliot's version this will be "complete", "adult", "orderly"). Speaking about John Hopkins' poem "Absence", Brooks says:

> A superficial view might dismiss the poem as merely a pleasant sophistry. But closer reading will show that the development of the wit has succeeded in endowing the poem with a sense of personal tenderness and sincerity lacking in the more abstract opening stanzas. The ability to be tender and, at the same time, alert and aware intellectually is a complex attitude, a mature attitude, but not necessarily a self-contradictory attitude. Only a sentimentalist wills it to be so. Moreover, the tenderness is achieved, not in spite of the wit, but through it. (MPT, p. 23)

As one might conclude, Brooks' method of analyzing poetry in this case is more categorically persuasive than factual or analytical. Like Eliot, Brooks tries to convince rather than to make a point or prove something. He is more concerned to find verbal or logical reasons in order to protect his views from criticism, than to search for textual evidence which would support his opinion and theoretical hypothesis. Therefore, his analyzing is sometimes still on the level of speculation, rather than on the level of interpretation. Because he builds his analytical arguments around a previously assumed theoretical assertion, Brooks most often fails to achieve accuracy and consistent quality in his analytical writings.

III. THE MATURE PERIOD:

The Function of the Concepts of Irony and Paradox in Analyzing Poetry; the Contextual Approach

a) The Inner Forces: Tension, Conflicts

I have already discussed Brooks' views on Organicism and his early definitions of poetic structure. The function of the concepts of wit, images and metaphor played an important role in his analysis of poetry, as well as did his additional teachings about paraphrase, symbols and the formalist approach to literature. However, the real significance of Brooks' contribution to the New Critical movement came with his best written book, The Well Wrought Urn (1947),[33] the book which outlines and precedes the principles of the new contextual approach which would take place in "Irony as a Principle of Poetic Structure". Since these principles deserve special attention, before showing how they were employed, we will discuss first their theoretical aspects and implications.

The first essay in the book, "The Language of Paradox", prepares the ground for the concept of Irony, which would come two years later. The Well Wrought Urn is more an analytical than a theoretical book. The book consists of ten detailed interpretations of famous poems from the Elizabethan period to the modern, but all statements are clear and free of speculative ambiguities. Brooks starts his analysis of Wordsworth's sonnets by introducing the concept of paradox.

Accordingly, "the language of poetry is the language of paradox; and "the truth which the poet utters can be approached only in terms of paradox", because in science alone "truth requires a language purged of every trace of paradox", the latter being so "appropriate and inevitable to poetry" (WWU, p. 3). Brooks insists on the claim that the poet is "forced into paradoxes by the nature of his instrument", which is language understood as "an extension of the normal language of poetry, not a perversion of it" (WWU, p. 10). Poets consciously employ paradoxes in order to gain "a comparison and precision otherwise unobtainable". He points out that all basic metaphors, as well as the dominant metaphors in Donne's poems, involve paradox and irony which are achieved through the conflict of image or symbols. This conflict starts with the basic metaphors which introduce the theme of the poem, and develops further through the dominant metaphor which brings the opposing elements into the focus of the reader's attention, so that the final result is irony or paradox as a sort of discovery and fusion of all discordant or opposite qualities. For instance, in Donne's "Canonization" this is achieved first through the basic metaphor which is in the title and suggests that both love and religion, as well as profane love and divine love, are going to be treated equally seriously, and in the same manner. The dominant metaphors introduce the conflict which opens up as the conflict between the real world and the world of love, as experienced by ordinary lovers, and it reappears as the description of the "unworldly lovers" and the love of saints "who have given up the world, (but) paradoxically achieve a more intense world". (WWU, pp. 12-13 et passim.)

In "Irony as a Principle of Poetic Structure", the concept of irony is explained in a more extended way, but the basic condition is still the same. The context dictates the relationship of the elements to each other and to the theme, but the conflict is the major precondition for its poetic quality. Brooks explains it as follows: "The context endows the particular word or image or statement with significance. Images so charged become symbols; statements so charged become dramatic utterances."[34] This means that each element is "modified by the pressure of the context", and irony appears as a complete reversal of the meaning which is directly effected by the conflicting poetic patterns: metaphors, images, symbols, etc. The circle is again closed at the same point; as a final product irony is understood as the union or fusion of all discordant and opposite elements. Brooks needs this type of explanation because it perfectly fits in with all the other theories of his teachings: as the organic unity, irony holds all answers of the poem; as the complex of attitudes or patterned structures, it continues the traditional semantic theory of Richards, Empson and almost all the other New Critics. Furthermore, Brooks needs this theory so badly that he goes to extremes and attempts to create a universal method out of the concept of irony, claiming proudly that, taken as the acknowledgment of the pressures of context, irony is to be found in the poetry of every period and even in simple lyrical poetry.[35] Instances, levels and forms of irony can have a wide variety of modes. Therefore, there can be tragic irony, self-irony, playful, arch, mocking, gentle irony, and so on; but from the point of view of its function in the poem, irony serves only one unique purpose - to be the unifyng force and crossroads for all other forces in the poem.

However, in spite of some similarities in the function of both paradox and irony, there are also certain differences. For instance, according to Brooks, any statement made in the poem bears the pressure of the context, and has its meaning modified by the context. But, in poetic irony, none of the meanings cancels out the others, because all become relevant, and all contribute to the total meaning. One might wonder what the "total meaning" is, knowing that Brooks rejects the possibility of paraphrase. In the case of irony, the total meaning is usually identical with the theme of the poem; it is born out of the conflict of elements. The function of both paradox and irony is to bring the poem to its most penetrating insights. The difference is that irony represents both contrasting and reconciling elements of the structure; in opposition to paradox, which is apparently a contradictory and canceling force within different kinds of meaning. Thus, the former is born out of the pressure of the context, and the latter out of the conflicts of meaning.

Obviously, Brooks' semantic theory, used here to support his views on paradox and irony, has its foundations in the theories of Coleridge, Richards and Empson. Irony was one of the concepts most popular among the Romantics, and Brooks simply adjusted his organic theory to the principle of Coleridge's teachings about opposites and conflicting meanings. With Richards' teachings about the attitudes and the two kinds of structures: the structure of exclusion or extension, with its excluding and canceling forces, and also the structure of inclusion or intension, with its including and unifying forces,[36] he combined Empson's basic semantic theories about ambiguities as contrasting, reconciling or conflicting factors in poetic structure. Having in mind all the above mentioned statements made by Brooks, Empson's statement in _Some Versions of Pastoral_ (1935) sounds so anticipatingly Brooksian:

> _The chief point of the poem is to contrast and reconcile conscious and unconscious states_, intuitive and intellectual modes of apprehension; and yet that distinction is never made, perhaps could not have been made; _his thought is implied by his metaphor_.[37]

Clearly, Brooks was moving in the same direction, leaving Organicism and accepting contextualism.[38] His approach is still not completely free from earlier categories, but at least his analyzing became in a scholarly way more accurate and convincing, with a better balanced application of theoretical concepts, and fewer adjustments, even when that analysis becomes too simplified and too much a matter of routine. Critics like R.S. Crane were still to complain about Brooks' critical monism and his lack of fresh ideas, because most of Brooks' interpretations are similar, regardless of the poems or the poets that he analyzes; but in spite of these limitations, Brooks has made his point, offering some of the best close readings of already very well-known poetry, challenging the previous analyses by strictly textual discoveries.

b) Poetic Structure as a Set of Meanings: Distinction between the two Conceptual Frameworks - Poem and Poetry; Brooks' Contextualism

Before any further discussion of Brooks' analytical methods, it will be necessary to take a closer look at his final definitions of the poem and poetry. This is of the utmost importance not only for the better understanding of his views and his final analytical conclusions, but also, and particularly, because there are serious objections among different kinds of critics (originating with R.S. Crane and the Chicago Critics, and continuing with M. Krieger and Paul de Man) that Brooks' analyses usually fail because of his inability to properly distinguish between a poem and poetry. Leaving out for the moment their arguments that he is either confusing or overlooking the differences between the two concepts, let us see now the final shape of Brooks' definitions of the poem and poetry, as he formulates them in The Well Wrought Urn. As was already mentioned before, he accepted the Burkean concept of drama, using it to describe the organic structure of the poem. However, combining this with the Richardsian concept of inner tension or conflicts existing among elements of the poetic structure, Brooks came to the conclusion that poetry is a form of "dramatization, . . . a controlled experience which has to be experienced"[39] by the reader. This sounds quite contradictory to Brooks' supportive statements about Ransom and the other New Critics who criticized Richards' psychologism, but, at that time, Brooks objected to anyone who favored the logical aspects of poetry. He argued with his opponents that there was not a "formula" or "logical process" which qualifies something as poetry.

The "essential structure" of a poem is compared now with "that of architecture or painting", i.e., it is also analogous to ballet and music, as "an action rather than as a formula for action or as a statement about action". Being drama or action, the poem has its duration, i.e., its beginning, middle and the end (this is a combination of Organicism and Burke's theory of dramatism); and its unity. Struggling with the inadequate terminology, Brooks redefines both the concept of poetic structure, which becomes a set of "meanings, evaluations, and interpretations", and the concept of unity which now has a function to balance and harmonize "connotations, attitudes, and meanings". (WWU, p. 195) The new key words, balance and harmony are not referring to "homogeneous grouping pairing like with like", says Brooks. The unity is supposed to happen between "like and unlike. It does not unite them, however, by the simple process of allowing one connotation to cancel out another, nor does it reduce the contradictory attitudes to harmony by a process of substruction. The unity is not a unity of the sort to be achieved by the reduction and simplification appropriate to an algebraic formula. It is a positive unity, not a negative; it represents not a residue but an achieved harmony". (WWU, p. 195)

This new shift in Brooks' theorizing is going to be stressed even more in one of his best known essays, his text-manifesto "My Credo: The Formalist Critic" (1951), which summarizes, in twelve articles of faith, the main principles of the New Criticism. Although the new direction towards Richards, Burke and particularly Empson (in his practical analysis) sometimes meant a direct challenge and opposition to the Ransomian points of view, this change in the development of

Brooks' critical system is a natural result of the new interest for practical analysis rather than for theorizing. Focusing his attention more on the interpretation of poetry, than on the explanation of his own and the official critical position of the movement, which was constantly questioned by his detractors, Brooks has finally found a solution to express his opinion without being too much obliged to back it up with a proper argumentation based on a valid and perfectly organized theoretical system. This new behavior of Brooks as a practising critic rather than as a theoretician of criticism was sometimes very effective in creating difficulties and confusion among the scholars who tried to properly define Brooks' type of textual analysis. Besides the old accusations such as "intellectual aesthetism" (Douglas Bush and Darrel Abel), "critical monism" (R.S. Crane), which were almost identical with some later qualifications such as "aesthetic formalism" (Walter Sutton), "Organistic and symbolic formalism" (R. Wellek), the application of "rhetorical instruments of Neo-Romanticism" (R. Foster), the most accurate description of Brooks' criticism came from his most seriously dedicated critics: F.A. Pottle, A. Kazin and Herbert Muller (who accused Brooks of critical relativism which emphasizes "technique, mechanism, outward show", but ignores the poet's mind and its contribution in the reader's distinguishing a Shakespeare from some minor poet), as well as from Murray Krieger (who similarly criticized Brooks for attributing a premium stress on complexity - "the more complexity a poem has, the better it is").[40]

Murray Krieger was responsible, however, for another accurate qualification of Brooks' critical methods. To describe Brooks' analytical approach to poetry he uses the term "contextualism". Brooks indeed speaks about the function of "context" on several occasions, particularly in his essays on Irony and Paradox. But Krieger has a different connotation in mind. He claims that the New Critics introduced a new aspect in their theory of language, a "contextual" correlation between language and reality, between the poetic language and life. As different from other types of communication, e.g., science or everyday language, the word or symbols in poetry may function referentially, but their poetic structure prevents them from switching their functions. Thus, considered contextually, words in poetry cannot have isolated semantic functioning as they do have in everyday language or science. Words in poetry simply correspond to the specific poetic meaning which the poet implies by creating the individual poetic structure. Accordingly, contextual criticism deals with this specific poetic meaning which is determined by both the poetic structure and its context.[41]

IV. BROOKS' METHOD OF CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS:

Concepts of Paradox and Irony Applied in the Analysis of Tennyson, Wordsworth and Keats

Many critics have noticed that Brooks' method of analyzing poetry works much better when applied to metaphysical poetry. The question is what it does when it is applied to other kinds of poetry. Instead of showing only one kind of Brooks' analytical performances, in all fairness to him and his opponents, I have decided to demonstrate how his methods of close reading function under deliberately unexpected circumstances. Whether it was satisfactory or not, Brooks used to choose quite unusual examples for his analyses. Rather than to make theoretical replies to the attacks of his critics, and committed from the very beginning to the idea that his methods can be applied universally and regardless of the kind of poetry involved, Brooks counterattacks his opponents by offering to prove that irony and paradox can be found even in the poetry of such poets as Tennyson, Wordsworth and Keats, poets who might be the last to be accounted for as intellectual ones. This challenge does not always work properly, but it helps to discover both the good points and the limitations of Brooks' analytical methods. We have chosen to discuss three different situations of Brooks' analyses: one, when his methods work surprisingly well; the other, when he fails to prove his point; and, the last one, when, in a very well known poem, he discovers surprisingly new meanings.

1) Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears"

The attempts to reply to the criticism of the New Critics' methods of interpreting poetry lead towards quite unexpected examples. Reacting against accusations such as intellectualism, monistic approach or repetitive and oversimplified argumentations, in one of the essays published in 1944, Brooks decided to use the analysis of Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears", in order to prove that even poets as Tennyson could be "associated" with the subtleties of paradox and ambiguity. The same essay, "The New Criticism: A Brief for Defense" (1944), is later reprinted in the book The Well Wrought Urn (1947), under the new title "The Motivation of Tennyson's Weeper".[42] The new version, however, includes also the analysis of Tennyson's other poem "Break, Break, Break", but polemical references and theoretical arguments are omitted. Let us see now how both Brooks' analysis and his arguments work, as they first appear in the first version of the essay.

The first account that interests Brooks is to find out how the poem relates to its title, and, accordingly, what the main points of unity are in each particular stanza. This approach might look very simple, and one must wonder how it was possible that it has irritated all kinds of scholars, even those who were proponents of the traditional thematic approach to literature. But, in spite of this impression, when the analysis starts to progress more rapidly, it becomes obvious, particularly after the first explanations of the symbols of tears, that Brooks' interpretation of Tennyson's poem is not limited to a thematic type of criticism.

His method goes deeper than a simple search for verification of the title in the symbols or imagery of the poem. Following the reading of the first stanza:

> Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
> Tears from the depth of some divine despair
> Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
> In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
> And thinking of the days that are no more.

Brooks discovers that if we want to use ordinary logic there is a paradox between the poet's claims about "idle" tears and his statements that the tears originated "from the depth of some divine despair", and "rise in the heart" as the result of "looking on the happy Autumn-fields". According to Brooks' interpretation, the first stanza recapitulates not the real grief but the surprise and bewilderment in the speaker's own mind, and sets the problem which the succeeding stanzas are to analyze. (WWU, p. 189) The poet calls the tears "idle" in spite of his admission that he is not aware what they mean, even if they come from "some divine despair" and he realizes that they are the result of thinking about the past and "the happy Autumn-fields". The real meaning is in the last line and in the expression "the happy Autumn-fields". The poet wants to suggest that his tears are a psychological reflection of the past as the image of something permanent, finished, and that is the reason why the poet uses the expression Autumn-fields, rather than something else. The autumn-fields point back to something which is over and would never be repeated. This means that the poet's feelings are real and deeper than a mere meditation. The second and third stanzas read as following:

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

The dramatic effect of the poem is achieved by strengthening the contrast between the two sets of images as the opposing poles of the basic metaphor about the tears. One brings the new elements into the reader's focus of attention (sad, but fresh days of the past; a ship bringing the friends from under the world; sad and strange; contrast between colors - glittering, the last which reddens, dark summer dawns, a glimmering square); the other creates the thematic contrast between the symbols of life and death (a ship coming up firstly, then sinking; half-awaken'd birds; dying ears and dying eyes). Both sets of images are supposed to work on two different levels. "On the surface, the comparison is innocent: the 'underworld' is merely the antipodes, the world which lies below the horizon - an underworld in the sense displayed in old-fashioned geographies with sketches illustrating the effects of the curvature of the earth", says Brooks. (WWU, pp. 169-170) But, the poem is not merely a "gently melancholy reverie" on the sweet sadness of the past, because the poet conjoins the qualities of the "underworld" and the quality of sadness and freshness with the symbols of darkness, dying, and the underworld of Greek mythology as the realm of the shades and the abode of the dead.

According to Brooks, the ironic and unexpected reversals of the poetic meaning reach their intensity in the last stanza:

> Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
> And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
> On lips that are for others; deep as love,
> Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
> O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

We have already witnessed the apparent richness of Brooks' conclusions through the vivid and unconventional comparisons of the contrasting points in Tennyson's poem. However, the most brilliant accounts of Brooks' analysis are reached here, in his interpretation of the irony and paradox which occur in the concluding lines of the poem. Apart from the unity achieved in each stanza individually, the cycle of the poem's significance is closed definitely in the last stanza by intensifying the accounts of the ironic contrast which runs through the other stanzas as the repetitive motive of tears, sadness, dying, remembering and so on.

The main points of Brooks' analysis are that the poem says something totally different than we think that it says, and this hidden meaning is indicated by certain key-words which transfer and sum up the final meaning of the poem. For instance, the indication in the third stanza, how sad and strange the past might be to the poet, while the sound of the birds' piping is heard and unrecognized by the man who is dying, is paradoxical. We do not know why the past days are so sad and strange, for the mere contrast between the living birds piping and the dying man listening is not necessarily paradoxical and strange enough to create the complete image of hopelessness and the reversal of the roles. This needed ironic contrast Tennyson achieves in the last stanza, starting with the imagery of "dear" and "remember'd kisses after death", which are compared to those "dear, dead days beyond recall". Suddenly the poem becomes obscure because the poet introduces metaphors which are quite ambiguous: kisses after death become sweet as those "by hopeless fancy feign'd / On lips that are for others"; the days that are no more are not merely "dear" and "sweet", they become "deep as love" and "wild with all regret"; but the culminating paradox is achieved in the line "O Death in Life" which indicates that the poet considers those days of the past to be a kind of death in life. Brooks finds these questions fascinating and he uses them as the evidence to prove that here was Tennyson's conscious effort to make the poem more artful and poetically better organized. The adjectives "fresh", "strange", "deep" and "wild" create ambiguity, and in combination with the adjectives of a descriptive nature they suggest the passionate, irrational and emotional side of memories ("sad", "sweet", "dear", "hopeless", etc.). However, the quality of the culminating ironic contrast is in the major metaphor of the poem; in the comparison of the days of the past being "deep" and "wild" as love. According to Brooks' explanation, the poet uses these two expressions to suggest that the days (deep and wild) are "buried but not dead - below the surface and unthought of, yet at the deepest core of being, secretly alive". (WWU, p. 174, cf. also pp. 171, 172-173 et passim.) The past, which should be tame, fettered, brought to heel, is capable of breaking through and coming up to the surface. Accordingly, the word "wild" is maybe bold, but justified; because, it reasserts and maintains the development of the earlier metaphors which are only a preparation for the final line

"O Death in Life". Brooks makes his point very clearly:

> The last stanza evokes an intense emotional response from the reader. The claim could hardly be made good by the stanza taken in isolation. The stanza leans heavily upon the foregoing stanzas, and the final paradox draws heavily upon the great metaphors in Stanzas II and III. This is as it should be. The justification for emphasizing the fact here is this: the poem, for all its illusion of impassioned speech - with the looseness and *apparent* confusion of unpremeditated speech - is very tightly organized. It represents an organic structure; and the intensity of the total effect is a reflection of the total structure. (*WWU*, p. 174)

In regard to the roles of ironic contrast and paradox, Brooks limits his comments to saying that his aim was to prove that they "*do* exist in the poem; and they *do* have a relation to the poem's dramatic power". (*WWU*, p. 175) "Tears, Idle Tears" is the poem with genuine lyric qualities because Tennyson *was able to analyze his experience, and in the full light of the disparity and even apparent contradiction of the various elements, bring them into a new unity*, securing *not only the richness and depth, but dramatic power as well*. (*WWU*, p. 177)

In responding directly to Darrel Abel's objections which appeared in "Intellectual Criticism" (1944),[43] as one of the most severe attacks on Tate, Ransom and himself, Brooks sums up his answer in five critical principles: 1) Criticism does not propose to substitute itself for the poem; 2) It does not pretend to constitute an expression of the critic's own emotional response to the poem; 3) It does not propose to "explain away the magic of the poem"; 4) It does not propose to "intellectualize" the poem unless talking about it as carefully and sensitively as possible constitutes intellectualization; and 5) It does not propose to represent the process by which the poet worked out the poem or to constitute a formula by which other such poems might be written.[44] Furthermore, Brooks concludes that the difficulties to find "legal" evidence of the poet's intentions do not give the critic "carte blanche" to read into the poem anything that he wants. All the critic's arguments must be found and recognized in "the structure of the poem itself".

However, in The Well Wrought Urn, the above mentioned polemical parts of the essay are replaced with the additional analysis of another poem by Tennyson, "Break, Break, Break". Those who feel that this must be a very strange choice should remember that Brooks owes a lot to Richards, who inspired him most for his theory of Irony. As is evidenced in his analysis of the poem, Brooks has read Richards' commentaries on Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break",[45] and he has decided to make his viewpoints stronger by expanding and going beyond Richards' original arguments. In Principles of Literary Criticism (1924), Richards speaks about two kinds of poetry. One evolves a definition of uni-directional experience or emotions such as Sorrow, Joy, Pride; attitudes like Love, Indignation, Admiration, Hope, or a specific mood as Melancholy, Optimism or Longing. The examples for this type of poetry, according to Richards, are Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break" and Shelley's "Love's Philosophy".[46] The other type of poetry is poetry of a superior rank, so-called the poetry of "inclusion", which consists of contrasting groups of impulses that create a unity of opposites and, despite its heterogeneity, this type of poetry provides "the most valuable aesthetic responses".[47] This is achieved by poetic imagination. Instead of dealing with a plain, single and definite emotion, as in the first type of poetry, the poet exposes his experience to an ironical amount of contemplation. The "inclusive" poetry is the inclusion of irony in itself, in other words. As examples of genuinely great poetry, Richards quotes Keats' "Ode to the Nightingale", W. Scott's "Proud Maisie", Donne's "Nocturnall upon S. Lucie's Day", and Marvell's "The Definition of Love" and "Sir Patrick Spens". Brooks' choice to analyze Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break" meant a direct challenge to Richards and all the others who claimed that there were such things as "emotional" or "intellectual" poetries. He wanted to say that what most critics saw in Tennyson simply was not there, because that was something that they already wanted to see, not what was really there. If the traditional critic claimed that Tennyson was not an "intellectual" but rather "emotional" poet, this type of critic would look for evidence to prove his point rather than to see what is in the poem. Therefore, Brooks found this to be challenging enough just to prove the opposite. The poem "Break, Break, Break" follows the same mood and the same pattern as the already analyzed "Tears, Idle Tears". The same imagery occurs in both poems, therefore, proves that irony and paradox not only exist, but contribute also to the quality of the poems. This conclusion could not be made if one accepts the conventional accounts which "oppose emotion to intellect, 'lyrical simplicity' to 'thoughtful meditation'", says Brooks. "For the lyric quality, if it be genuine, is not the result of some transparent and 'simple' redaction of a theme or a situation which is somehow poetic in itself; it is, rather, the result of an imaginative grasp of diverse materials - but an imaginative grasp so sure that it may show itself to the reader as unstudied and unpredictable without for a moment relaxing its hold on the intricate and complex stuff which carries." (WWU, p. 177) The point that Brooks tries to make is valid. This time he limits his admiration for paradox and irony to the point that he wants to prove: that they exist, as literary forms or poetic devices, even in the "thinner" types of poems such as those of Tennyson. He is defending poetry against the critics, but in a sense he wants to defend the right of critics to prove that the solution for solving the poem's puzzle is to be found in the poem itself. The question of paradox and irony being omnipresent qualities is present indeed, but it is not underlined and plays a rather secondary role. Brooks says that they exist and obviously contribute to the quality of the poem, but he does not insist, as he usually does, that they have to exist as the only qualities.

2) Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood"

For some New Critics, such as Ransom, Brooks and Tate in particular, Wordsworth's poetry, in addition to his theory, is a topic almost equally challenging as Coleridge's criticism. As a critic, theoretician and practitioner, in different periods of his career, Brooks would come back to Wordsworth's writings looking with a new interest for approval, or for new arguments against his detractors. Unfortunately, in spite of some valid points made in theory, most of Brooks' analyses of Wordsworth could not always offer sufficiently convincing counter-arguments to his opponents. Unlike his analyses of T.S. Eliot and Yeats, or of Donne and Milton, which are praised as examples of the New Critical best close-readings of poetry, Brooks' interpretations of Wordsworth were generally questioned by such critics as Murray Krieger, Richard Foster, or even Walter Sutton, who are usually quite sympathetic towards the New Criticism. There is only one interpretation that obtained less approval from critics than Brooks' analyses of Wordsworth; that is his interpretation of Gray's "Elegy", which was chosen by R.S. Crane in his famous attack on Brooks as an example of the New Critics' misreadings and abuses of text.[48] However, let us see now why Brooks' complex analyses of Wordsworth fail to satisfy the critics, in spite of some good reasoning at the very beginning.

Before giving any analysis, Brooks warns the reader that his interpretation of Wordsworth's "Ode: Intimations"[49] is going to be based on these two principles: 1) all external sources or judgments leading towards conclusions about the poet's intentions must be completely rejected, i.e., no use of Wordsworth's biography, letters, notes, or even other poems is permitted in making judgments about this poem; 2) the main and only criteria should stem from the results of an examination of the full or partial success, or relative failure, of the poet's presentation of imagery, which should, in the case of success, carry on and develop further the poet's thought.

Brooks starts his analysis by examining the introductory motif in which the poet expresses his feelings of loss and longing for something that happened in the past. This initial argument Brooks finds in Wordsworth's complex metaphor which consists of several parallel comparisons. The argumentation is built up through several different readings of the same ambiguous passages which suggest ever different meanings. At this point, Brooks' method is quite similar to that of Empson, in his book Seven Types of Ambiguities (1930).

For instance, the imagery of the first stanza of Wordsworth's "Ode" suggests a contrast between two opposites: the earth and the moon, things uncelestial and celestial lights, day and night, the memories of the past and the reality of the present, the glory and the freshness of dreams and the feeling of the emptiness of real life, and so on. Brooks chooses to base his arguments on two expressions in this imagery, one is the word "apparelled" which describes that the earth was once "apparelled" in celestial light (the garment motif, as Brooks names it), and the other refers directly to the comparison between the celestial light and the glory and the freshness of a dream (WWU, p. 127). Brooks argues that there is a paradox in Wordworth's attempt to reverse the way of perceiving familiar objects. Starting his analysis of the symbolism of dream in Wordsworth's poem with the reference to Freud's claim that dreams "cannot be dissected and analyzed" because they reflect strong emotional qualities of familiar (homely) things, Brooks points out that Wordsworth achieves this by endowing with strangeness things that are gone. The insubstantiality of a dream is compared to the insubstantiality of glory, but the ambiguity of the whole recollection is created by the contrast between the child's vision, whose dream is remembered by the man: "It is not now as it hath been of yore", says the poet. What the speaker has lost belongs to the past, to that childhood which is duplicated in the imageries of a dream and of a "visionary gleam" as something impractical, not completely real, as well. Brooks points out that this contrast deepens as the poem progresses, and the relationship between the opposites becomes even more emphasized or intensified. For example, in stanza II, the visionary gleam is related to the man's feelings of nature's beauty being lost, with the poet's emphasis on the description of various forms of celestial light (rainbow, moon, stars, sun, and so on). The moon is treated as the child, i.e., as the speaker himself, and the new paradox is created in the image which suggests that the poet cannot see the visionary gleam, but the moon is able to see it - "she sheds the gleam herself, she lights up and thus creates her world" (WWU, p. 129).

Brooks' analysis goes on very smoothly and quite convincingly until he introduces his main argument and explanation of the theme of the poem as paradoxical. From now on, he will try to prove that all Wordsworth's poetic devices lead towards the central symbolism of the poem, which he calls "the paradox of imagination". He omits for the moment discussing Stanza III and IV, saying that the imagery of child and light represents only the preparation for the major theme of the poem, which appears in the Stanza V. He refers to the famous lines "Our birth is but a sleep, etc.", comparing them to the lines from Stanza II ("The moon doth with delight / Look round her when the heavens are bare"), drawing the conclusion that this comparison of light with boy is the major symbolism of the poem. For a moment he is right, because Wordworth compares the youth's progress with the rising and descending of the sun, or with the final appearance of the moon. Brooks is right indeed in his comments that the child's moving away from heaven, which represents his home, would finally end in the "shades of the prison-house closing about him", but, at this point, he also introduces his own interpretation of Wordsworth's parallel between the light and the boy.

According to Brooks, Wordworth's idea of man's mortality is not presented here in the usual manner of contrasting light with darkness, but in contrasting and varying different kinds of light. "We have a contrast", says Brooks, "between prosaic daylight and starlight or dawn light", which functions to suggest the opposition between the symbols of the mortal or prosaic with the symbols of the divine and glorious. And he quotes these lines to support his opinion: "At length the Man perceives it die away, / And fade into the light of common day" (WWU, p. 130). The quotation is from the very end of Stanza V.

Brooks' expectations are quite high. His ambition is to compete with previous interpretations of Wordworth's poetry, and from that point of view, it would be marvellous to prove that Wordsworth really wanted to create "the paradox of imagination", using the contrast between two kinds of light, one to suggest the glory of living (i.e., the symbolism of life represented in the images of celestial lights), and the other to suggest the plain and "homely" triviality of existence (i.e., the symbolism of mortality represented not by darkness but by uncelestial kinds of lights). Unfortunately, Brooks plays a little trick on his readers here. To prove his point, Brooks purposely transposes the meaning and the order of the images in the poem, by avoiding to discuss the parts of the poem in which the poet does speak about the symbolism of darkness, leaving out as well those topics or details different than those suggested by him (which serve their purpose in connecting various elements to the main stream of imagery), or simply by ignoring the fact that the introductory imagery (i.e., the comparison and the parallel imagery of light and child in Stanzas I and II) is not necessarily the major theme or symbolism of the poem. But Brooks claims it to be and that this appears in Stanzas V or IX. This manoeuvre was necessary, because the immediate discussion of Stanzas III and IV, which offer the contrast between the imageries of light and darkness, would conflict with Brooks' scheme prepared *a priori*.

It is true that the symbolism of light is one of the major motifs of the poem. However, this does not mean that this motif is necessarily the only or the most important one; therefore, to isolate it and state its presence as a condition for all other elements seriously jeopardizes and narrows the critic's approach to the poem. As the main objection to Brooks' analyses, this was the most difficult one for him to defend in replying to the criticism of his opponents. In his plea at the very beginning of the essay, trying to outline the standards for his analyzing, Brooks says: "It is far more important to see whether the generalizations proposed about the nature of the poem are really borne out by the poem itself" (*WWU*, p. 126). Unfortunately, by introducing the concept of paradox which was not "borne out" naturally from his analysis, Brooks himself did not keep the promise which he was preaching, nor would he pay too much attention in future to the objections and promises which seriously question his system of argumentation. Brooks' reply to this type of argument is that the poet's idea is to be followed through the repetitiveness of a central motif, which in this case is the symbolism of light. According to Brooks' understanding of Wordsworth's poem, the motif of light functions as both the paradox of imagination, i.e., the central theme of the poem, and as the main source of the poem's symbolic meaning. Brooks builds the skeleton for his analysis based on two assumptions: 1) that there is a parallelism between different images; and 2) that there is a counterbalance between the expected and the suggested meaning, intended purposely by the poet to confuse the reader, i.e., the contrast between the real meaning and the potential ambiguity as the hidden meaning. For instance, Brooks claims that one of the main qualities of Wordsworth's poem is achieved by using several parallel comparisons in order to create ambiguity. As the first example, Brooks chooses to point out that there is a metaphorical variation of the motif of light as the celebration of birth and growing up, as well as the celebration of nature and sunrise, i.e., the development of the boy in comparison with the parallel rising of the sun. However, even in this first example Brooks leaves out other possible meanings, such as that this celebration of light and sunrise might connote the celebration of mind and soul, as well as the glory of Epiphany, particularly because the sun is later on very directly compared to the supreme being, a God (c.f., Wordsworth's metaphors such as "the master of heaven", "an eye that hath kept watch o'er man's mortality", etc.). As in the case of the climax in the rising of the sun and the equivalent phase in the development of the boy, Brooks avoids discussing these problems, replacing them more conveniently with the discussion of the sun's descent and man's mortality. And at this point we face the first intriguing encounter with Brooks' theory of paradox. As already mentioned before, Brooks connects the *setting of the sun* with Wordsworth's lines about mortality and *light fading into another light*. According to Brooks, this imagery should be interpreted as the paradoxical suggestion that the *descending of the sun* (which is also associated with man's mortality) *does not end in darkness but fades into the moonlight or starlight*. This is because, Brooks explains further, the sun as a symbol of light becomes a destroyer of life, and it has to be replaced by another light, the moon, which is a symbol of celestial and divine things. Obviously Brooks is trying to say something that is not in the poem. Because, careful reading shows that Wordsworth did not intend to compare the descending of the sun with the fading of one light to another, he was comparing *dying to fading* as the process of the replacement of one light with another. Since Wordsworth uses so many different variations and combinations of comparisons and metaphors to describe the symbolism behind the imagery of light, obviously it would be a great error to consider that one meaning should prevail and take precedence over the others. Therefore, in Stanza V, when Wordsworth says that *the vision splendid* would *die away, and fade into the light of common day*, he simply wants to say that when the time comes to die, it would happen in daylight, without any glory, during an ordinary, *common day*, and nobody would even notice that you are gone: light fading into another light, i.e., a life being replaced with another life. Obviously, Brooks did not want to consider this or other possible explanations because they would endanger his theory. Therefore, he would continue to manipulate the meaning of the imagery in the following stanzas, using always the same method of extending the meaning of the symbols and metaphors which resist his type of interpretation. This textual resistance would occur more noticeably in those cases when he finally decides to discuss the problems which he was trying to avoid for one reason or another. Usually these reasons are either a simple refusal to recognize the existence of controversial issues, such as the imagery of light related to darkness, or other images not directly related to the motif of light, but which are related to the main stream of symbols and metaphors, or they are a conscious attempt to avoid following the natural tempo and order in the poem's flow of metaphors by grouping together different stanzas, such as I, II and V; then III, IV and IX, and so on, according to his own conception prepared a priori. This method helps him to achieve his goal very easily. By avoiding controversial issues he is able better to control, and choose the arguments which would support his theory. Since there is no method which is one hundred per cent workable and fail-proof, thus, in spite of his desire to make his methods more workable and universal, it should be expected that these efforts fail. Serious deficiencies in Brooks' otherwise very interesting analyses are not caused only by his uncritical application of his own theoretical meditations, but also by injecting the ideas of Coleridge and Richards where they should not belong. For instance, whenever his analyzing shows the signs of failure or an inability to prove convincingly the presence of paradox in Wordsworth's poem, Brooks is ready to call on the authority of Coleridge and Richards (WWU, pp. 140-141, 142 and passim). These two gentlemen have their own reasons in interpreting

Wordsworth; therefore, Brooks is obviously mistaken if he believes that the recalling of the previously made arguments can help his own analysis. First of all, Coleridge's analysis of Wordsworth's poetry is quite biased, expressing more the personal differences between the two poets (poetically and critically), than really showing how the poetic elements are structured in their functioning. Richards is more interested in the analysis of particular parts of the poem, regardless of their eventual functioning in the scope of the whole poetic structure. He is interested in exploring the world of possible and unexpected meanings in order to point out that there is no limitation to the process of the poetic imagination. Thus, both these critics have their own and very specific demands in front of them, and those demands are actually their real goals, not the interpretation of Wordsworth's poetry as such. Accordingly, Brooks' usage of Coleridge and Richards appears unnecessary and inadequate to sufficiently back up his own arguments. However, besides these general reasons for not accepting Brooks' inclusion of somebody else's arguments in his own analysis, more serious objections can be made in regard to his not so obvious manipulation and distortions of the text. Brooks' methods of analyzing poetry only superficially appear as simple and not too academically oriented. His tone is very casual and it seems that he does not pay too much attention to what he is saying. On the contrary, the fact is that Brooks' analyses are very elaborate and complex.

First of all, it is important to say that Brooks is very systematic and careful in dealing with, or choosing, the objects of his analyses. His process is usually well thought out, almost perfectly consistent and relatively convincing if observed isolated, outside the context, and regardless of other possible connotations, comparisons or critical approaches. Although this kind of criticism has a personal touch which can be equally appealing and causing of resentment, its main weakness is not a lack of objectivity, but a lack of further alternatives. If one is to attempt a comparison or just a simple checking of data offered in the results of Brooks' analyses, one would discover to his surprise that there are serious material omissions and unusual gaps in the proceedings of the analyses. If the comparison is done against the background of another interpretation, it soon becomes evident that the reason for these omissions was of an extrinsic nature, and that the same extrinsic element serves as the major postulate chosen by Brooks in his approach to that particular work of literature. For instance, if the study of the nature of the omissions shows that Brooks wanted to avoid the traditional approach, because he did not want the traditional interpretation as a part of his own analysis, this rejection and his persistent efforts to find new explanations for already accepted symbolism would immediately direct his analysis against any compromise with the traditional explanations. In other words, the omissions are always the result of avoiding the proper arguments which can damage the whole analysis, and the deficiencies in the analytical proceedings are usually motivated by the author's interest in providing the evidence which would rather prove his point, or in making his analysis more believable, in producing some answers for the questions posed by his analysis of poetry. As the Chicago Critics have already pointed out, Brooks was more interested in producing evidence for his theories than in looking for the explanations or the results of his analysis of poetry. For instance, whenever he is in a position to analyze some more frequently occurring symbols, particularly those which are related to the group of images which create a specific unity such as the imagery of light-darkness, but which belong to the motif of darkness (such as "shades", "shadowy", "cloudy", "clouds", or "sight", "eye", "blind", "blindness", etc.), Brooks reverses the meaning of the material which might directly disprove his point. As already mentioned, this is done by his isolating preferred details as being the more important ones, and by constantly avoiding issues which might show that there was no paradox in Wordsworth's poem. To be quite precise, one might make a list of these symbols according to the suggestions given by Brooks. There are two kinds of parallel imageries, one that operates on the level of the parallelism of ambiguous images and symbols; the other one operates on the level of contrasting the ambiguous images and symbols. For example:

BROOKS' TWO LEVELS OF IMAGERIES IN WORDSWORTH'S POEM

1. Parallelism

light - earth
sun - soul
boy-sun - moon-earth
sun - moon
boy - earth
earth - creatures on earth

2. Contrast

boy - sun
sun - earth
moon - earth
tree-eye - tree-earth
tree - earth
landscapes - sounds of living creatures

Naturally, both groups do not stand isolated from each other: they intermix, further creating more complex relationships, but Brooks' point is that these relationships are crucial for us in making a decision as to whether they should be treated as irony (parallel images), or as paradox (contrasting images). There is no particularly clear reason how this should be done, especially because there is no explanation why one particular set of images produces irony instead of paradox, when the same set can be considered at the same time either as "parallel" or "contrasting" images. For instance, when Brooks decides to compare images in Stanzas III and IV, with images in Stanzas IX, X and XI, he deals with the description of valleys, mountains, meadows, etc., as contrasting images in comparison to the images of the same landscapes, but now full of sound and joy. Therefore, the descriptions of sound and sight are no longer parallel images, because they appear also on the level of divine and "unattractively plain" (or "homely") images, which are used as contrasting images. This method of the transposition of meaning is used very often in Brooks' analysis, probably because it gives him an opportunity to shift the meaning from the traditionally accepted to a new and unusual connotation. Let us see another example how it is done.

In Stanza VIII, this transposition of meaning opens up possibilities to interpret some otherwise well-known Wordsworthian metaphors (such as "eye", "tree" or "earth") in a quite unusual and unexpected manner. I am referring to the comparison of the child and a Philosopher, and those famous lines: "Thou Eye among blind, / That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep . . .". In his analysis, after quoting this, Brooks leaves out ten important lines, and continues with: "Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke / The years to bring the inevitable yoke. / Thus, blindly with thy blessedness at strife?". The omissions are important for Brooks in this case, because they make it possible for him to transpose the meaning from one level to the other. The incomplete passage becomes paradoxical, because now Brooks can make conclusions that (A) "blindness and darkness in this poem are not the easy and unexpected antitheses to vision and light" (WWU, p. 132); and that (B) "there is method in Wordsworth's paradoxes: he is trying to state with some sensitiveness the relationship between the two modes of perception, that of the analytical reason and that of the synthesizing imagination" (WWU, p. 133). Accordingly, as in his analysis of the relationship between the symbols of "shades", "shadowy recollections" and "darkness" and "blindness" in Stanza IX (which precedes his analysis of Stanza VIII), Brooks sees the symbol of "child" exclusively as the representative of the "synthesizing imagination", i.e., as the metaphorical presentation of the irrational way of knowing things, which the New Critics favor as superior to the rational one. Therefore, there is a general shift in the meaning for all images related to this subject matter, and Brooks would interpret "shades" and "shadowy recollections" also as the paradoxical fading in, i.e., as memories fading into the light of common day; as he will interpret the child (who can see, but does not know that the others are blind, and tries to behave as being blind too), as the example for "the isolated fact of vision" (WWU, pp. 133-134). At this point Brooks strictly follows Richards' interpretation of Wordsworth, according to the discussion in Coleridge on Imagination (pp. 133 ff.). Unfortunately, what comes as very natural in the scope of Coleridge's and Richards' analyses, as a part of their theoretical beliefs, immediately becomes obstacle and inappropriately fitted in Brooks' system of analysis.

Richards' interest in Wordsworth's poem is restricted to his attempts to correct Coleridge's interpretation of Wordsworth. He rejects most of Coleridge's charges, with the motivation that they are a product of a different mind. In other words, originating each in a different doctrine, both the poetry of Wordsworth and of Coleridge are created under the influence of completely different literary concepts and different kinds of imagination. Accordingly, there is a mind of the poet which penetrates *the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude*, gaining an insight into reality in order to see Nature *as a symbol of something behind or within Nature not ordinarily perceived*. Richards calls this "the realist doctrine" and as its realization, he quotes the passage in Wordswoth's "Ode" where the child sees Nature as a *celestial* light. On the contrary, as the opposition to above, the projective doctrine operates under different conditions; i.e., it occurs when the mind of the poet *creates a Nature into which his feelings, aspirations and apprehensions are projected*. In the "Ode", this second doctrine can be recognized when *the child projects his joy over nature as the moon projects its light over the bare heavens* (*WWU*, p. 145). Richards thinks that these two doctrines are in constant opposition, effecting equally the poem itself, as well as regarding Wordsworth and Coleridge as authors. Therefore, he could not accept Coleridge's explanations that most of Wordsworth's attributes to the child are inappropriate because they are "equally suitable to a *bee*, or to a *dog*, or a *field of corn*, or even to a ship, or to the wind and waves that propel it" (WWU, p. 142). Richards quotes from Wordsworth's poem "And let the young lambs bound / As to the tabor's sound!", saying that after these lines the poet does not need to make a distinction between the attributes of the child and other creatures. Obviously, Richards would explain the famous lines where the child is compared to the Philosopher and a deaf and silent eye, using the same type of reference to Nature. Richards says that the expressions "deaf" and "silent" extend the meaning of the metaphor of the child being an "eye", which is another metaphor for "philosopher", too. Richards does not see anything paradoxical here; on the contrary, silence is a normal condition for both wisdom and Nature. Quoting Lao Tzu and Coleridge himself, Richards says that a wise man does not speak, like Nature which works in silence, both knowing the answers without being interrogated.

In comparison with Richards' and Coleridge's interpretations, Brooks' interpretation seems to be too far-fetched. He uses both interpretations as a pretext for his own speculations, but he rejects accepting what comes naturally with it, i.e., Wordsworth's "naturalism" and the obvious religious connotations of the poem. In pursuing his own idea about Wordsworth favouring light-imagery, Brooks says: "The eye taken as an organ of sense, is naturally deaf and silent. The child cannot tell what he reads in the eternal deep, nor hear the poet's warning that he is actually trying to cast away his vision. If the passage seems the high point of extravagance, it is also the high point of ironic qualification. How blind is he who, possessed of rare sight, blindly strives to forfeit it and become blind!" (Ibid.,

p. 134.) This sounds perfectly clear and convincing if one does not consult the ten lines which Brooks omits from his analysis. Here are these ten lines in context which we will repeat, underlining those parts at the beginning and in the end where Brooks' quotations lie:

Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep, (here B)
Haunted forever by the eternal mind, -
    Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
    On whom these truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou Little Child, yet glorious in the night
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke. . . . (here B)

As one might see, Brooks ignores those images with implications of the light-darkness symbolism, as well as those which create the dilemma as to whether the poem is theistic or pantheistic, the same dilemma that equally puzzled Coleridge, Richards and all the others who tried to analyze the poem. The ambiguity of the lines which say that the Eye, in spite of being "deaf and silent", can read "the eternal deep" stops with the lines which say that the Child is "Mighty Prophet! Seer blest! / On whom these truths do rest". Furthermore, the poet says that this exceptional Eye is "haunted forever by the eternal mind". (Here the poet refers to the reason why the Eye can see more, and see even something that nobody else can see, and knows things that others cannot apprehend - these truths "which we are toiling all our lives to find", and which will be found where they were lost "to find, in darkness lost, the darkness of the grave".) This connotation of the cycle life-mortality being completed is obvious and present throughout the whole poem. The poet's message is particularly clear in the next few lines which follow: "the Immortality broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave"; i.e., over the little Child, who is "glorious in the night of heaven-born freedom" which is measured by, or depends on, his growing height. However, in Brooks' interpretation, the celebration of the child as the Prophet has a different connotation. Brooks has to accept the symbolism of the "divine" which is implied in the imagery of the child, but he explains it as absolutely free of any Christian connotation. For instance, in discussing the last stanza and the very end of the poem, Brooks concludes that "the poem is about the human heart - its growth, its nature, its development", and that "theology, ethics, education are" only "touched upon" (WWU, p. 146). Brooks openly rejects the religious connotations of the poem and its previous reputation as the representation of the poet's belief in pre-existence, pantheism, and so forth. He indeed highly praises Wordsworth's usage of the contrast between "divine" and "natural" as the major motif of the poem, but, at the same time, and despite his admission that Wordsworth utilizes some very traditional Christian symbols as the background for his images, e.g., child, lamb, tree, lilies, etc., he creates completely new explanations for them. He is very much aware of the so-called Wordsworthian "naturalism", but he purposely tries to avoid to debate it by replacing it with the discussion of some secondary problems, such as the meaning of the contrast between the symbols of sound and sight, the function of the words "shades", "shadowy", and "clouds" as the paradoxical reversal of their original connotation (dark, darkness); the symbolism of the Child's prophecy as an "Eye among blind" (i.e., seen rather as a special gift, a rare kind of vision), etc. Although the original idea does not seem to be too different from Brooks' interpretation, for both Richards and Coleridge speak about contrast and the two opposites as characteristics of Anglo-American poetry, Brooks' idea of paradox derives from these conclusions. And in spite of some accuracy in Brooks' initial idea that the major motif must be in the parallelism of a few different images (light-darkness, child-sun, etc.), most of the other material introduced by Brooks, in particular, that related directly to renewals and adaptations of Coleridge or Richards, only creates more confusion and a false image about the poet. In pursuing his own ideas about Wordsworth's images, Brooks does not hesitate sometimes to choose and follow only one direction, forcefully eliminating all other possible solutions. Brooks' ideas are not always clear and acceptable, in spite of the fact that sometimes his analyses coincide with Coleridge's and Richards' analyses of Wordsworth's poetry. As was mentioned before, this influence asserted itself more or less at the expense of much better analytical solutions. Brooks' analysis of poetry is much better when it is not biased and directed by his theories.

3) Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

The New Critics very often used to analyze the same poets, challenging previous, traditional interpretations by offering several, sometimes quite different explanations for the same poems. Regardless of the function which these analyses have had in the New Critics' constant struggles with their opponents, one might question the serious need for this procedure. There is no clear reason why the New Critics liked to analyze the same poems, over and over, particularly because this was not done either for the sake of academic pedantry or because of competitiveness; maybe to satisfy some personal ambitions, but mostly to challenge the previous interpretations, which can be challenged in much better and more successful ways than by a few analyses of the same poems. The New Critics were not scholars in a pure sense; they were neither trained as such, nor did they really attempt to be such academics. They were poets or creative writers first, who happened to teach and love literature, and here is perhaps a clue as to why they tend so often to analyze the same poems. Their creativity asks for more and more proof, for the quantity of the variations for the same arguments which can be missed if only one analysis is made. However, the results of these analyses are important to us for two reasons. One is obviously the fact that they are the New Critics' contribution to the history of criticism and English Literature; the other becomes more important only if one attempts to understand more deeply the significance and mechanism of the New Critical analytical methods. The usefulness of these analyses becomes predominantly more important when attempts are made to examine the methods of the New Critics in the scope of their own system, rather than in any comparison with the results of some other interpretations. Then the whole perspective changes and the New Critics' analytical efforts can be seen in their full light.

One of the most brilliant examples of two successful but different interpretations of the same poem is to be found in criticism done by Cleanth Brooks and Kenneth Burke.[50] Coming to fascinating conclusions about the possible meanings of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn",[51] the two critics were able to convince the reader that even in so well known poetry as Keats' poetry, one can find ways for a new approach. Interestingly enough, the only real connection between these two analyses is the fact that both critics felt that the genuine challenge to their interpretative capability lies hidden in the last two lines of the poem ("Beauty is truth . . ."). Thus, both critics have dedicated most of their time and efforts in examining the functionality of the poet's imagery in relationship to its very last lines. However, Brooks' approach also emphasizes the importance of relating the very beginning of the poem with its ending, making it a condition of the analysis before the analysis has even been started. His immediate attention is directed towards the unusual metaphor at the very beginning of the poem. In the opening lines the poet compares his Grecian urn with a "Sylvan Historian". Brooks points out that this is the most puzzling attribute among all that Keats is using to describe the Urn. Why the comparison with "sylvan historian", and what does it mean?

According to Brooks, there is an apparent and paradoxical contradiction between the imagery of silence, i.e., the Urn is compared to a "bride of quietness", and called a "foster-child of silence", and the imagery of historian, i.e., the Urn has the ability to tell a "leaf-fring'd legend" of "Tempe or the dales of Arcady", or to "express / A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme". This paradox Keats has to solve by attributing the third quality to the Urn - being an "historian" the Urn does not tell any kind of "truths" or stories; it recites the tales about the forest instead of those related to formal history. (WWU, p. 155) But, the fact that the Urn's utterance covers forests and fields makes it inevitable that the historian must be a sylvan at the same time. In other words, Brooks claims that there are two reasons why the poet needs to compare the Urn with a "Sylvan historian". One is based on the assumption that the Urn is a "rural historian, a rustic, a peasant historian" who tells stories about forests and fields. The second reason is based on the quality and type of stories that the Urn recites; those stories are like unheard music, sweeter than any audible music; played on "ye soft pipes" below the threshold of normal sound, but if we listen carefully, we can hear it (WWU, pp. 156-157). This "unheard music" is the music of gods, or godlike men, or superhuman gods, as Brooks would say, and indeed there is a contrast between it and silence, as there is between life and death, gods and men, violent love-making and soft ecstasy, etc. Brooks' parallel works perfectly because it does not go further or beyond the textual evidence. He points out that there is a paradox in the scene which describes a Bacchanalian love-making and in the imagery of a "still unravish'd bride" who is described as a "foster-child", a child "of silence and slow time" (WWU, p. 156).

Brooks' explanation of this paradox is fascinating. First of all, unlike Burke who offers a Freudian explanation, (combining the knowlege about Keats' illness with these contrasting images, Burke claims that their meaning is suspended sexuality), Brooks suggests that certain motifs like "still unravish'd bride", "never canst thou kiss", "thou canst not leave / Thy song", etc., imply that the Urn's beauty is changeless, like the maiden herself, not even ravished by a kiss. For, regardless of the fact that it constantly goes on, the action never touches the actors. For instance, the lover is not satisfied and content, "never canst thou kiss", but he is motionless because the song will not allow him to leave, and he will stay in spite of this paradoxical situation: "thou canst not leave / Thy song". Similarly, the bride is caught in her imagery of motionless child unravished by a lover's kiss. The poet even calls her a "foster-child", because as a child of silence and slow time she does not have real parents, but foster-parents. "Silence and slow time" are too old to have borne the child themselves, says Brooks. Accordingly, the Urn is still young and fresh, because all its antiquity and time (which destroy everything) have "fostered" it. (WWU, pp. 157 and 156.) And the Urn is also caught in its silence as is the bride; the silence of storyteller.

Those and similar implications of meaning which Brooks finds in the Ode bring some new dimensions to the interpretation of Keats' poetry. This time Brooks' searching for paradox works quite successfully because, here, Brooks' primary goal is not to look for evidence to support his dubious theories. Although it is evident that Brooks is particularly good in explaining details of poems, his analytical pattern becomes rather inadequate in the analysis of larger and more complex poetic units. For instance, when he is supposed to sum up all his arguments into one final conclusion, or to connect different sets of images around one single topic, his method fails to provide convincing results. Paradoxically enough, he is able to see that there is a certain type of relationship between various groups of symbols or imageries, but in spite of it, he never produces appropriate ways to put them where they belong. One of the reasons for this lack of synthesis in Brooks' interpretative exercises is due to his rejection of looking for some additional explanations besides those of a purely textual or linguistic nature.

For example, throughout the whole analysis of the various forms of the repetitive motif of silent beauty which parallels the motif of beauty is truth, the truth is beauty, Brooks never makes an effort to connect the conventions of Romanticism with the symbolism and imagery of Keats' Ode. Because, regardless of their specific functions in his poem, Keats' images of silent beauty (like those Romantic images of sleeping beauty, innocent beauty, beauty and the beast, etc.) are so common and typically Romantic (as well as the very slogan "Beauty is truth, truth beauty"), that the intentional omission of mentioning the connection between the poet and the traditional symbolism of Romanticism not only seriously endangers the validity of Brooks' interpretation, but also poses a question of the purposeness and significance of his analytical efforts. As Burke points out in his analysis, one can easily notice that Keats' poem operates on two motivational levels: there is a contrast between the motifs of gods and the motifs of men ("deities or mortals" and "pipes and timbrels", etc.). The critic's task is not only to point them out, but also to explain their real significance (as Burke was trying to do by offering the Freudian explanation for some symbols and images). Brooks' analysis fails to answer these fundamental questions properly because he as a critic does not want to have a complete answer, nor does he want to ask questions which need completed answers. Therefore, for him, the transformation of truth to beauty and beauty to truth, which is the real topic of Keats' poem, is not a philosophical question which needs to be answered in the philosophical manner, but rather it is simply a question of paradoxical and contrasting exchanges of imagery in the poetic structure which represents the poet's absolute free space for making puzzles and ambiguous games of speech. This is the only limitation in Brooks' otherwise brilliant analysis of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn". Presumably, he was falsely modest when he was saying that the purpose of his analysis is not "novelty", or to differ from "past interpretations" (WWU, p. 164). Summarized, here is his explanation of the poem:

> . . . Throughout the poem the poet has stressed the paradox of the speaking urn. First, the urn itself can tell a story, can give a history. Then, the various figures depicted upon the urn play music or speak or sing. . . . If the urn has been properly dramatized, if we have followed the development of the metaphors, if we have been alive to the paradoxes which work throughout the poem, perhaps then, we shall be prepared for enigmatic, final paradox which the "silent form" utters. (WWU, p. 165)

Therefore, the cycle is completed: all paradoxes are like the final paradox, but if we have understood the previous paradoxes we shall understand the final paradox too. In other words, Brooks purposely avoids discussing the philosophical implications of the line "Beauty is truth, truth beauty", claiming that it represents only a "speech 'in character' and is supported by a dramatic context" (WWU, p. 165). According to his theory of the "heresy of paraphrase", we should resist the temptation to deal with "the assertions made in a poem" by taking them in isolation, out of their organic context. He is satisfied with general statements like this: the 'truth' which the sylvan historian gives is the only kind of truth which we are likely to get on this earth and, furthermore, it is the only kind that we have to have. Because, assumes Brooks, we have to have the essential truth which is not in data, names, special circumstances, but in beauty itself. And Beauty means an insight in the essential truth. Therefore, the sylvan historian tells his story as a history without footnotes (WWU, p. 164). What is a history without footnotes? It has the same validity as a myth; it is more than a simple make-belief, or an idle fancy, it is a valid perception of reality (Ibid.).

So much about the message of the poem which was supposedly to be discovered by the comparison of the imagery at the very beginning of the poem with those at its very end. Regardless of Brooks' more obvious attempts to avoid straightforward answers, there is a conflict of interest in his reasoning here. He cannot abandon his theories and simply analyze the poem regardless of the theoretical postulates, because his analysis serves his theories; at the same time, he would like to continue looking for more paradoxes, but there is a dead end here, and he has to stop when he is supposed to determine one single topic which would represent what the poems says. At this point his theory of paraphrase forces him to be consistent, and he has to leave the question of the poem's meaning open, and thus, many answers that he implied that he would obtain from his analysis were to remain unformulated. By obeying the rules of his own theories, Brooks has put limitations on his analysis even before he started with the reading of the first few lines. This actually caused him to make certain adjustments in order to protect his analysis from severe criticism. Therefore, his analysis suffers from almost an inexcusable incompleteness at its very end, after being so promising and imaginative when he introduced his prerogatives.

V. THE CRITICS ON BROOKS

In comparison with those New Critics like Ransom and Empson who were vigorously but rightfully attacked by their opponents, Brooks was more often unjustly accused for sins which were neither his own nor significant enough. They were simply minor and almost meaningless on the larger scale. He was a fine target for almost everyone; there was no critic who did not try, in one way or another, to prove that Brooks was wrong somewhere. The more Brooks resisted his critics, the more eager were they to attack. Even his colleagues, particularly Burke, Ransom, Tate and Winters, were never hesitant to criticize him and oppose his views. In spite of Brooks' reconciliatory efforts to bring the two poles of New Criticism together, he was criticized equally by both sides. If one might say that Ransom was generally overpraised or Empson underestimated, Brooks was probably the New Critic who was the most misunderstood and misinterpreted by his fellow members in the movement. Brooks' intention to be the theoretician of the movement irritated almost everyone, and each tried to question his abilities and his right to do so. Despite the fact that almost each New Critic assumed a right to play one role or another in the movement, some of them even with disastrous results, (Ransom as a philosopher and the leader of the movement, Tate as an organizer of symposiums and propagator of the New Critical ideology, R.P. Warren as a writer of textbooks, Wimsatt as the official interpretor of the main New Critical doctrines, Empson as the *enfant terrible* and left winger [together with Burke], Winters as the moralist interested in structuralist analysis, Blackmur as an obscurantist in theory, and more oriented towards prose in practice, etc.), Brooks' role was always disputed, but, in the long run, his opinion would finally prevail.

The milestones of Brooks' theory are his teachings about metaphor, his definition of poetry as a conflicting, paradoxical structure of elements whose message is not paraphrasable, and his doctrine of organic unity. Almost all New Critics have criticized Brooks on account of at least one of these issues. Even Robert Penn Warren, his closest associate and the joint author with Brooks of quite a few books,[52] did not agree always with Brooks' ideas, and later on he openly resented them. Apparently, it seems that the New Critics share the same understanding and taste about poetry, but their dispute starts when they try to make an apology for the type of poetry which they favor. For instance, when Ransom attempts to define the poetic structure of the poem, he speaks of a dualism of "logical structure" and "local texture"; Tate speaks of "tensions"; Warren of symbols and "resistances"; Brooks about "wit", "irony" and "paradox"; Winters about "motives" and "emotions"; etc. As R.S. Crane has pointed out, the New Critics' definitions of the poem show quite obviously that they see the poem as a one-dimensional, reducible characteristic of one element regardless of the multi-dimensional structure filled with irrelevant meanings. They deny vigorously the idea of critical monism, but it is alleged that the New Critics' search for either "irony", or "tensions", or "symbols", or "imagery", and so on, is confined to a one-dimensional approach to the interpretation of literature.

According to Crane's article, "The Critical Monism of Cleanth Brooks", it is possible to distinguish four different forms of critical monism appearing in the writings of the New Critics:

1) Like most New Critics, Brooks prefers to speak about the structure of poetry rather than about imagination. The analysis of the poem is reduced to the contextual or linguistic analyzing of one particular element of the poetic structure, which replaces the possibilities for the criticism of other important elements (plot, theme, idea, characters, etc.) from the points of view of grammar, logic or psychology, and so on.

2) The New Critics' serious failure is the lack of a clear distinction between the concepts of poetry and the poem, as well as between poetry and prose. Critical monism appears here as the New Critics' obsession with semantic differences between poetry and prose, which are explained as the two kinds of language (i.e., symbolic language of science, and emotive language of poetry), two kinds of discourse (prose and poetry), or two kinds of knowledge (literature as saying the truth), etc.

3) Brooks' structural and organic theories completely ignore the fact that there are many different kinds of poetry. According to Brooks and other New Critics, it is impossible to see any structural differences between even so different poems as the Odyssey and The Waste Land. The New Critics' approach favors one kind of poetry, and Brooks' decision to ignore the differences within poetry itself means an impoverishment of poetic theory.

4) The New Critics' failure to deal with other features of poetry and with fundamental differences between different kinds of poetry is apparently caused by the New Critics' greater concern for likenesses than differences. Theoretically, the New Critics are closer to Plato than to Aristotle, and their analyses are based on a priori assumptions rather than on logic and real structural reconstructions.[53]

To explain these charges against Brooks and other New Critics, Crane uses an argument contrary to the traditional explanation of the theoretical background of New Criticism. It is true, says Crane, that the New Critics build up their theories in the tradition of the Romanticist idea of the antithesis between poetry and science, but the reason for the lack of consistency and acceptability is in the New Critics' departure from the Coleridgean model of poetry. The limitations of Brooks' definitions of poetry are caused by his refusal to follow more closely in the footsteps of Coleridge's definitions of poetry and the poem, and, accordingly, the reasons for Brooks' failure should be sought for in his attempts to simplify Coleridge's definition of the poem.

Unlike the New Critical definitions, Coleridge's definition of the poem still relies on the definition of poetry, but in terms of the "poet". For example, in Biographia Literaria (chapter XIV), Coleridge speaks about poetic structure in terms of balancing and reconciliatory forces, but unlike Brooks' interpretation, these are now a part of the poet's imagination. In other words, Coleridge's definition of the poem is based on the same principle of opposites, but the poet's imagination determines the poem, rather than the structural conflict within its elements. Therefore, the definition of the poem is equally determined by the definitions of poet and poetry, and Brooks' major fallacy was in ignoring the role of the poet. According to Crane, Brooks has abolished the philosophical differences between poetry and poem as well, and, by fusing the two concepts, he has produced a consequent loss of analytical values on both sides (Crane, p. 89).

The second major objective in Crane's criticism of Brooks is in regard to Brooks' acceptance of Richards' theory of language. Like Ransom and Tate, Brooks accepts the doctrine of two different languages. The language of science, or symbolic language, acts as in its pure denotative form, quite unlike the language of poetry, or emotive language, which is altered by tensions and semantic shifts which have a pure connotative function. Crane's criticism against this theory raises a strong point that its traditional framework restricts the author to abandon sooner or later the dualistic formula which treats the problem of truth as based on the degree of excellence achieved or represented. In other words, Brooks is more concerned with the concepts of "rational" and "abstract" in the case of science (or scientific discourse), and with the concepts of "pleasure" and "structure" (with its own concepts of unity, irony, paradoxes, etc.) when they apply to poetry; but his main concern remains cognition. He is not interested in any degree of difference between various forms of "pleasures" or various forms of "rationalizations"; he measures only the final result; and accordingly, for Brooks and other New Critics, poetry is a much superior form of cognition than is science. Since Brooks uses this explanation only in an analogical sense, to clarify his understanding of poetic structure, and to point out that the task of the poet is to "unify experience", Crane's criticism of this part of Brooks' theory becomes more concentrated on the parallels in thinking between Brooks and Coleridge, or between Brooks and Richards.

Crane's more concrete comments are addressed to Brooks' usage of these theoretical concepts in practice. He summarizes his critical remarks in a few categories, but two of them prevail as the most important ones: 1) Brooks' definition of poetic structure derives from Coleridge's definition, not of "poem", but of "poetry" (Crane, p. 91); 2) In making what remains of Coleridge's definition of "poetry" the definition of "poems" as contrasted with works of science, Brooks has cut himself off from any such critical use of the concept of this. One consequence of this is that speaking about "poetic structure", Brooks introduces no distinction that depends on a conception of the poetic process (p. 92). Brooks' key concepts, "paradox" and "irony", reflect unmistakably their grammatical origin, says Crane (p. 94). At the same time, the attempt to make them universally significant prevents him from "dealing adequately with poetic works in terms of the sufficient or distinguishing causes of their production and nature" (p. 105). Crane is more than convinced that Brooks' fundamental error is caused by the fact that he "theorizes about poetry at the wrong end". Instead of dealing with one of a few internal causes of the poem, it would be better if Brooks decides to deal with "concrete wholes of various kinds, the parts of which, with their possible interrelationships, can be inferred as consequences from inductively established principles" (p. 105).

Crane was not the only critic to object to the New Critics' obsession with semantic differences between poetry and science, which was carried on to another popular obsession - efforts to defend the position of poetry against the expansiveness of science. Brooks was almost equally attacked by such prominent critics as Herbert Muller, Frederick Pottle, and Alfred Kazin; David Daiches, F.O. Matthiessen and

Murray Krieger;[54] as well as by the New Critics themselves: Ransom and Tate, R.P. Warren and Winters. Each group of these critics deals with one specific aspect of Brooks' criticism. For example, earlier critics (Muller, Pottle and Kazin) expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of literary history in Brooks' criticism, accusing him of critical mechanicism (Muller) or relativism (Pottle and Kazin). In the essay entitled "Criticism, History and Critical Relativism" (WWU, pp. 215-252), Brooks has tried to answer these charges. He defended his position arguing that he was more interested in the literary work itself, rather than in the poet's mind or literary evolution. His major argument was that he was against critical relativism which in his interpretation might lead towards the disappearance of all judgments. He says:

> Suppose that we adopt the theory of critical relativism. We will then judge Wordsworth, not by the standards of the Age of Pope nor those of the Age of Donne. Each period will be considered *sui generis*; we will have criticisms, not Criticism. (WWU, p. 231)

His idea of Criticism assumes that the critic's choice of perspective and critical standards should not be restricted by historical circumstances and changes in literary conditions. He believes in the universality of his critical system as an answer to the multiplicity of judgments which he sees in critical relativism. In his views, the preference for Metaphysical Poetry is a proper counterbalance for historicism, because he would rather accept critical monism than the adjustment of critical standards according to the requirements of a new situation. He rejects Pottle's idea that critical relativism appears as the result of the unhistorical approach to literature, with the critic claiming full freedom in choosing standards according to his own personal taste and preferences. On the contrary, in Brooks' interpretations historicism equals critical relativism.

Brooks' allegiance to a completely personal definition of critical relativism was particularly irritating to the next generation of literary scholars, which felt also very sensitive to the political slogans that the Southern New Critics were using in their campaigns and social activities. Aside from the Chicago Critics, David Daiches and F.O. Matthiessen are only two of the most eminent critics in the largest group of the New Critics' opponents. Unlike Murray Krieger, who tried to examine the aesthetic aspects of the New Critical theoretical failures, Daiches and Matthiessen made complaints also about the aesthetic background of New Criticism, claiming that there should be some responsibility on the critic's part for his writing. In other words, Daiches felt that the New Critics went too far, ignoring the ultimate goal and function of criticism which are not "to train other critics to train other critics in a barren academic succession of ingenious analyzers who talk only to each other" (Daiches, p. 104).

F.O. Matthiessen wrote about the New Critics and Brooks on several occasions, but in his essay, "The Responsibility of the Critic" (1952), his major remarks were against the exclusiveness and the aestheticism of the linguistic approach of the New Critics, which, according to Matthiessen, removed the critic's interest and responsibility away from man in his society to the formal aspects of the text. Praising the principles of a Marxist approach, Mattheissen claimed that the aesthetic act was in the same way inseparable from the social act, as are form and content. Therefore, the critic's responsibility is to recognize the significance of both. "This double quality of experiencing our own time to the full and yet being able to weigh it in relation to the other times is what the critic must strive for, if he is to be able to discern and demand the works of art that we need the most" (Matthiessen, p. 18). As did many critics at the time, Mattheissen warned the New Critics that they cannot stay in their ivory tower, and that the central responsibility and duty of critics is to widen their range of interests out of an "awareness of some of the world-wide struggles of our age". (Ibid.) In the New Critics' approach to literature, Mattheissen saw the potential danger of isolating the work of art from life, and he perceived the critic's goal in analyzing as analysis for the sake of another academic game. His distaste for Tate and Ransom is much stronger than for Brooks; his remarks are sometimes quite similar to those of A. Kazin, but Mattheissen's criticism is generally unbiased and to the point.

Murray Krieger belongs to the earlier group of authorities on New Criticism, but to those who were both sympathetic to and critical of its outcome. His book, The New Apologists for Poetry, (1956), is still considered as the most reliable and objective judgment about the movement and its major representatives. However, written in a traditional academic style, with obvious innovative ambitions to bring more than an insight into the subject matter, Krieger's book is sometimes too difficult to deal with, particularly because of the author's very specialized terminology (cf. the use of terms such as contextualism, linguistic aestheticism, etc.). Nevertheless, Krieger's account of

Brooks' writings is probably the most accurate one. Unlike Crane, who sees the reasons for Brooks' failure as an interpretor of poetry in Brooks' inadequately developed theory, Krieger thinks that Brooks fails mostly because of his tendency to make a priori assumptions rather than to use an inductive method (Krieger, p. 149).

Apparently, most of these accusations against Brooks were quite accurate. As for many other New Critics, for Brooks' theory was only a troublesome and misleading source of critical errors. His attitude hardly ever changed; his analyses were never used as the inspiration for theoretical speculation. On the contrary, he treated theory as a matter of belief and its reflection in the interpretation and its final results should not be verified, but accepted. This tendency towards assumptions made a priori is rather common among the New Critics, and the deficiencies in New Critical theory and practice are almost always caused by the same thing: the great expectation put into the initial working premises. For Brooks and his colleagues, who constantly dreamt of creating universal analytical methods, theory played the role of an additional tool, being used only to provide the evidence that their analyses were properly done.

However, this character of polemicism which stays hidden in the background of almost all New Critical texts, has a completely different meaning in the relationship of one New Critic toward another. Mutual influence and self-inspiring elements sometimes did not go further than sharing the same topic and, eventually, the same taste. Writing about the same ideas meant actually disagreement and a multiplication of the differences that already existed in the relationship of the New

Critics. The only changes and improvements that the New Critics accepted appeared as the result of their own interrelated polemics. Long disputes with the others never ended nor satisfied the rebellious New Critics. On the contrary, the opposition among the New Critics was quite fruitful. Ransom has been opposing Brooks' theories for years, but finally in 1950 he abandoned his own dualism, replacing it with a teaching based on three elements: logic, rhythm and metaphor. Warren and Brooks had for years been writing textbooks and articles, sharing the same opinion about everything, but after Warren wrote his two most important essays, "The Pure and Impure Poetry" (1943), and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1946), their opinions fell apart, and each one created theories of his own. Parallel lines can be drawn between Ransom and Winters, between Winters and Tate, Brooks and Burke, Blackmur and Winters, Ransom and Empson, etc. The confrontation of opinions among the New Critics was of the utmost importance in the development of their major doctrines; without it the formulation of many New Critical definitions would not be possible.

CHAPTER THREE

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WILLIAM EMPSON'S SEMANTIC THEORIES

Introduction

The true beginning of New Criticism belongs definitely to William Empson, the most controversial figure of the movement, and one of the most underestimated New Critics. After writing his first and best known book, Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930),[1] Empson became a target for very severe attacks. He was accused regularly in angrily written articles of 'crimes' true or false, committed against tradition and the academic establishment. In particular, his methods of interpretation irritated scholars. Almost constantly, Empson's analyses show unpermissible sloppiness and lack of concern for correct data and quotations, constant omissions of material and deliberate distortions of the text: misspellings, changes of word order and punctuation, etc. Unlike his unorthodox theorizing, which had its opponents, but was still accepted with a certain respect, Empson's analytical methods usually did not get enough credit, in particular because of his application of new analytical concepts. The concept of various types of ambiguity was not sufficiently popular in spite of the early praise he had received from admirers.[2] Because of these unfortunate circumstances, two important facts were always ignored in writings about Empson. First of all, the very same scholars who used to criticize Empson's theory so severely kept forgetting to consider his analyses which were written with a very strong motivation of provoking and posing some very serious theoretical questions. Secondly, those who criticize Empson's analyses kept forgetting that Empson uses different types of ambiguity mainly to achieve two things: to propagate the idea of multiple meaning when it is obvious that no single meaning can be pointed out as the only right one; and, the other, much simpler, which reflects Empson's wish to revive some of the classical disputes about the interpretation of literature.

The first question that should be asked in regard to Empson's approach to literature is whether his methods are useful or not, and how far the textual analysis should go. General objections to his method were focused on his favoring only one dimension of the text. In other words, the objections were directed against the analysis being based on the linguistic, formalistic, or the more or less structural aspects of the literary text. A critic of Empson's orientation would pay attention only to the intrinsic qualities of the text, ignoring completely its extrinsic implications. Mixed reactions arose as to whether it was necessary at all to introduce a semantic interpretation into the textual analysis of literature when this meant excluding other possible data on the subject matter. The proponents of this type of textual criticism claimed that textual analysis should include the historical, religious or mythical aspects of the text as well, and that the study of the literary language cannot be isolated from the study of the environment, the reflections and changes caused by changes in society, etc. According to those detractors of a more traditionalist vocation, the major objection to Empson's approach to criticism should be addressed to his refusal to discuss the intentions of the author. The propagators of contextualism objected as well that Empson's insistence on multiple meaning (which in his terms meant _all_ possible meanings according to the New Oxford Dictionary) actually discredited the poet's abilities and efforts to know exactly what his poem is about. If writing poetry is just playing with words and making puns and witty puzzles, then any reading is the right one. Thus, a reader can find any meaning and say that it is the real meaning of the poem, as a poet can also write anything and then say that he did not have any particular meaning in mind when he wrote that particular poem. And this would lead to the absurdity of the conclusion that all poems are alike, having no particular meaning at all, or, having all possible meanings at the same time. To answer all these questions and defend his position, Empson had to support his analysis with some theoretical explanations. Fortunately, his choice was not to look for counter-arguments, but to give a rather simple explanation of the mechanism of his own analytical proceedings.

Empson's early writings indeed represent an inspiring and original contribution to the movement, born out of the examples of analytical experiments, rather than of abstract theoretical speculations. Even despite the fact that the New Critics hardly ever share the same opinion on the same issue, Empson's controversial book Seven Types of Ambiguity, very soon became a model for the New Critical methods of interpretations, and many of his revolutionary ideas became inspiring elements in further theoretical meditations. Empson wrote three other books: one about pastoral, another on Milton, and the third on topics of language and semantics in general; but none of them ever achieved the fame of the first book. For the answers to the intriguing questions about the controversial success of Seven Types of

Ambiguity, one must naturally look back to the theoretical background of the book.

I. THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF EMPSON'S THEORIES

1) I.A. Richards as the First Inspiration

All New Critics very early show a special interest in studying the problems of language as one of the priority topics at the very beginning of their careers. Their very first attention is given to focusing on studies of the differences between ordinary and poetic language; comparisons of prose and poetry; the dual functioning of language as symbolic and emotive discourse, etc. In the more advanced phase of their theoretical development, attention is paid to those more specific studies of poetic language such as studying the specific features of poetic language according to changes in meaning, or according to the functioning of particular elements in the poetic structure. Since poetic meaning then becomes the centre of investigation, the New Critics approach the subject matter differently, because their treatment of the topic depends on their individual definitions of poetry, and on how they see the role of literature in reality.

According to the figure chosen as mentor, the New Criticism can be divided into two major groups: first, the pro-Eliotian group (Ransom, the early Brooks, R.P. Warren, and Tate); and secondly, the pro-Richardsian school (Empson, the later Brooks, Burke, and Blackmur). Since Winters inclines equally to T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards, he should be considered as a kind of transitional figure to be left unclassified as are the two late-runners Wimsatt (basically pro-Ransomian), and Wheelright (pro-Empsonian). However, in the case of Empson, most of these classifications must be taken very sceptically. First of all, unlike his colleagues, Empson is the only New Critic whose interest in studying poetic meaning as a specific feature of the poetic structure led him to make more general studies of the problems of language and semantics. This digression from the common practice starts with the practical analyses in Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930), where, at the same time, Empson also formulates his first theoretical principles. Partially, these principles were to be adjusted and applied to studying subjects other than poetry, as it later appeared in Empson's books Some Versions of Pastoral (1935) and Milton's God (1961). But the complete break comes with The Structure of Complex Words (1951). In this book Empson already breaks his ties with New Criticism, exploring a larger scale of topics, from general semantics to the different impacts of language, from social and historical reflections on the meaning of words, to the function of reverse sense in irony, and so on. Here genuine analyses of literature were almost completely abandoned.

In regard to Empson's relationship to Richards, there are many things to say. One naturally looks to Richards' Affective Theory, his teachings on metaphor and meaning, as well as to his theory of communication, in order to understand Empson's basic principles of criticism. Many explanations look quite the same, and Empson is mistakenly accused of not being too original. However, unlike his colleagues, those who were the faithful followers of Richards' ideas, Empson's own relationship to Richards is based on a pupil's opposition to the teacher, rather than on a full acceptance of Richards' theories. In other words, both critics, Richards and Empson, start their theorizing from the same premises and from the same positions, but arrive in the end at different conclusions. For instance, both critics consider that there is a dual functioning of language as well as of poetry. For both of them poetry is an activity of language, in the same way that language is an activity of life; both language and poetry can be considered as referential or non-referential, that depends on their role. If their role is to communicate and be communicated, their nature is referential; if they are supposed to express thoughts and emotions, their role is non-referential. At this point Empson and Richards draw apart. Richards propagates semantic positivism which deals with the language of science as referential because it refers to the world of physical realities, and with the language of poetry as being on a lower semantic level because it deals with emotions and feelings. In other words, the role of poetry is not aimed towards truthfulness; its role is in communication, either by expressing emotions, or by communicating thoughts and feelings.

In his essay "Communication and the Artist", in Principles of Literary Criticism (1925), Richards makes a distinction between knowledge and experience communicated by science as being different from "experience" communicated by the artist. The former is explained in terms of cognition and the latter in terms of values:

> The arts are our storehouse of recorded values. . . . Both in the genesis of a word of art, in the creative moment, and in its aspect as a vehicle of communication, reasons can be found for giving to

> the arts a very important place in the theory of value. They record the most important judgments we possess as to the values of experience. They form a body of evidence which . . . has been left almost untouched by professed students of value. . . . The arts, if rightly approached, supply the best data available for deciding what experiences are more valuable than others. (pp. 32-33)

One might see that Richards evaluates the arts very highly, but for reasons different from those of Ransom and most of the other New Critics. For Richards, referentiality and knowledge have nothing to do with the arts, in spite of the fact that both science and the arts (or poetry) are significant factors in the communication process. Prose discourse, or the language of science, deals with knowledge and experience on the level of referentiality, i.e. utilizing statements, unlike the arts which use judgments or pseudo-statements.

To understand completely Richards' theory of communication and the complexity of his concept of referentiality, one has to refer back to his teaching about metaphor and its two major constituents, "tenor" and "vehicle". Besides the differences between science and literature based on a dual function of language, there is another distinction to be made, based on differences between "symbol" and "metaphor".

Richards' semantics consist of a few very complex concepts which derive directly from his system of making distinctions between familiar notions. For instance, speaking about meaning in general, Richards says that all kinds of discourse are basically metaphoric, but their structure and function depend on "our sorting _this_ from _that_" (_The Philosophy of Rhetoric_, Lectures V and VI). The specificity of the meaning in the arts is created by the contradictory tension between the ordinary meaning of the words, and the symbolic images presented in a particular work of art. There are four ways to achieve unity in sorting and organizing the meaning of any discourse, because meaning depends on one of four aspects of discourse: sense, feeling, tone and intention. "A word by itself apart from an utterance has no meaning - or rather it has too many possible meanings", says Richards (Coleridge on Imagination, p. 101). One of the most common ways of creating meaning is the use of metaphor. "A metaphor is a shift, a carrying over of a word from its normal use to a new use", says Richards in one of his earlier works (Practical Criticism, p. 211). However, generally Richards does not specially emphasize the role of metaphor as Empson and Brooks do. When he says that all words are "metaphoric" and that all kinds of discourses are "communication", he wants to point to the problem of the functionality and multiplicity of meaning, not to talk about its specificity. In opposition to the New Critics, Richards believes that multiplicity of meaning is bad for any communication; therefore it is bad for literature too. He corrected his views in his later books, saying that all kinds of multiple meanings are not necessarily bad, but that he has never accepted the New Critics' view that one of the major differences (or the specificity) of poetic discourse has to be "metaphor".

2) The Concept of Poetic Images

Richards' early theory of art is based on the same principles as his theory of language. His understanding of language as different kinds of discourse based on different kinds of expression is quite confusing, and sometimes completely inadequate. Obviously, in attributing "symbols" to the language of science, and "metaphors" to language in general, Richards did not have too much left to describe properly the distinction between "symbolic language" and "emotive language". He has to start again with a dualistic conception of language which describes the differences between discourse based on function rather than on the structural characteristics of a particular language. For example, according to him, in science language functions to refer to something symbolically; in the arts and poetry, language is a tool to express attitudes and symbolic images. In other words, on the level of referentiality we speak about true and false statements (or statements and pseudo-statements); on the level of cognition we speak about complete knowledge and partial knowledge, and so forth.

Empson responded differently than the other New Critics to Richards' semantic theories. He generally accepted almost all their premises, but he directed his own speculations in a completely different way. For instance, he rejects speaking about literature as knowledge, but accepts the concept of literature as communication. Furthermore, in opposition to Brooks, who builds his theories based on Coleridge's teaching about Imagination, and Ransom, who rejects Richards, using Charles Morris' teaching of images and iconic signs (also substituting Wordsworth for Coleridge in order to oppose Richards' theory of cognition and images), Empson is closer to Shelley's teaching on images,[3] rather than to either Coleridge or Wordsworth. This unusual shift has to be explained historically, rather than as a case of some justified influence. For centuries, in Anglo-American literary scholarship, the word "image" has been used in a very special way, almost as a differentia specifica for literary criticism. This all started with Apologie for Poetrie, when, speaking about Ajax, Sir Philip Sidney talked about providing us with an "image of anger".

Comparing the poet with the philosopher, Sidney says that the poet "yieldeth to the powers of the mind an image of that whereof the Philosopher bestoweth but a woordish description".[4] The poetic image that Sidney refers to here does not necessarily have to be pictorial. As a matter of fact, the point is that the reader of the Illiad need not have any clear idea as to what Ajax looked like in order to respond properly to the poet's suggestion of Ajax's anger. Because, Sidney's explanation goes on further, the poetic image differs from any visual elements in its presentation.

Before Richards, almost all critics had followed this traditional concept of poetic images, which was extended and made more systematic during Romanticism by the inclusion of the concepts of irony, irrationality, imagination, and so on. In spite of his effort to change the basis of the traditionalist concept of poetic image as a substitute for theme or message, Richards has paid his tribute to tradition by the inclusion of intention in the four main aspects of discourse, and by defining the meaning of the sentence as what the speaker intends to be understood from it by the listener (The Meaning of Meaning, p. 193).

Empson accepted this earlier teaching of Richards' semantics, trying to combine it with the Romantic theories of poetry, and a Freudian conception of language. The novelty that appears here is Empson's theoretical kinship with Shelley's definition of poetry rather than with those of Coleridge or Wordsworth, as was to happen with other New Critics. We are referring here again to Shelley's famous comparison of the poet with a "legislator" and "messenger". Unlike other New Critics, Empson sees the role of poetry as being in its communicative faculties. He did not believe in Ransom's theory of literature as knowledge, although he accepts the Romantic idea of the superiority of poetry in comparison with science and other activities of the human mind. Empson would rather see this superiority as the result of the mystic role of the poets who were supposed to "communicate" their messages to the readers as kinds of prayer from an ethereal world, as Shelley would say. But, at the same time, Shelley's definition is a pre-condition for another concept accepted by Empson. Like Sir Philip Sidney, Shelley reserves that special role for poetic images also. Poets use images, says Shelley, to reanimate sensations, experiences or memories stored away at particular moments, or as a kind of collective treasury. For most Romanticists the function of poetic images was almost the same as that of mystic rituals - they were supposed to reawaken in the readers the same kind of feelings and emotions that the poet had experienced before or during the moment of creation.

3) American Semantic and Linguistic Tradition

According to his earlier books, Richards' semantics relies on three basic doctrines: The Affective Theory, the Communication Theory, and the Context Theory. This strange mixture of behavioristic psychologism, logical positivism, and contextualism in its very rudimentary form focuses mainly on the investigation of utterance and utterance meaning utilizing the concepts of symbolic and emotive language, impulses and attitudes, inclusion and exclusion, symbolism of images, metaphors and contextual meaning. But there is one very essential difference in understanding the concepts of "contextual" meaning, meaning in general, and poetic meaning between Richards and the New Critics. For the New Critics, poetic images play a more important role in interpreting literature, and also the poetic meaning is more than its psychological context suggests. Since Richards believes in a predetermined meaning of the word, which cannot be changed but can be made more or less subtle, contextual meaning for him is the result of interaction between words in one particular situation; that is, the inclusion and exclusion of elements of the general meaning create the synthesis of everything of importance for the meaning of the poem.

On the contrary, for most New Critics, poetic meaning depends on a contextual meaning which is created by poetic images. Empson, for example, teaches that there is no predetermined but multiple choice of meanings, and that to single out one particular meaning would mean interpreting away the contextual meaning; the other New Critics accept the unspoken rule that the investigation of poetic images means the same as the investigation of poetic meaning. Furthermore, some of them identify poetic meaning with the meaning of the poem, some do not; it depends on their approach towards Brooks' "heresy of paraphrase". However, regardless of the approach, the method of close reading reaffirms the fact that behind specific concepts such as Ransom's local texture and logical structure, Brooks' paradox and irony, R.P. Warren's symbols, Tate's tension, Winters' motifs, Blackmur's gesture, Burke's symbolic action, etc., lies the investigation of poetic images. Even in theory, such as Ransom's teaching on literature as knowledge, poetic images and their very specified meaning play an important role. For example, Ransom uses the concept of images to establish a distinction between scientific language and poetic language. To oppose Richards' teaching about symbols and images, Ransom offers C. Morris' teaching about icons and cognitions, or cognitive images. Other New Critics also offer their own versions of approaches to poetic imagery, but behind the theoretical scheme and phraseology there is always a search for poetic meaning.

Empson's version of contextualism is a significant departure from Richards' theory, and a slightly different teaching than those of Brooks and other New Critics. To understand how Empson arrived at his concept of ambiguity, one has to take in account many other additional sources besides those from Richards and the Romantics.

Linguistically, Empson follows the American tradition of Bloomfield's period, continuing directly on the path of Bloomfield's structural linguistics.[5] Before Empson, nobody had considered the problem of multiple meaning as an important issue in the analysis of literary works. On the contrary, many have thought, with Richards, that multiple meaning could create confusion and interfere with the relationship of the elements of speech, as undesirable in communication as in the creative process; for Richards, multiple meaning is considered an obstacle even in metaphor, standing between "tenor" and "vehicle".

In linguistics, scholars of the Yale School, led by Bloomfield, used to speak of components of meaning and their different functioning in the sentence and as single words. Bloomfield himself, whose influence and authority stayed unchallenged until Chomsky's revolution,[6] utilizes a very similar method for analyzing the multiple layers of the sentence, as did Empson in his search for ambiguity. This method is based on the dichotomy of lexical and linguistic features in a particular language structure which correspond to the conceptual differences between connotation and denotation, and which in sentence-analysis consists of bracketing the multiple components of meaning into its immediate constituents and ultimate constituents; such as in the following example:

"/The ((boy)s)/ /are ((sleep)ing)/".

The point of this type of analysis is to isolate not only various meanings, but also to separate irrelevant or unanalyzable material from that which is important and valuable. The procedure goes on many times, until all responses are exhausted, and all implications examined. Besides providing information, the goal of this type of analysis is to verify possibilities for certain hypotheses in regard to the smaller units of language structure (morphemes, phonemes, etc.). After Chomsky's victory, the Saussurian model had more chance of succeeding, but in practise, Bloomfield's model was never considered really obsolete or completely replaced by the European alternatives, even after the 1950's. The old model, best known as dichotomy of connotation and denotation, had already its popularity in philosophy and literature as well, appearing in various periods as a twofold concept consisting of sense and reference (Frege), intension and extension (Carnap), or recently meaning and significance (Hirsch), etc.

As regards Bloomfield's behavioristic theories, which are a part of his descriptive type of structural linguistics, it is necessary to mention a significant difference between the theories of Bloomfield and those of Charles Morris. Charles Morris follows directly in the footsteps of the great American Pragmatists, in particular Pierce's teachings on icons, symbols and indexes. Bloomfield was strictly a practicianer, interested in the analysis of morphological and syntactical forms of substitutions in linguistic units in order to discover both meaningful levels of communication and the role of the irrelevant constituents of the sentence during the communication. His method is still described as behavioristic, because his interest was not in obtaining answers for the problems of semantics, but for those in psychology. Charles Morris' interest is primarily in the theory of discourse, rather than in practical studies of communication.

Empson's response to these theories is quite unexpected. He agrees with Richards that language is a form of human activity which carries on more than a simple act of communication, because obviously, there are situations when language creates confusion and prevents us from comprehending reality. But he does not accept either Ransom's solution (literature as knowledge), or Richards' or Morris' teachings about poetic discourse. Since only Bloomfield's early works and Richards' theories were known to Empson prior to his publishing Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930), and because the works of Carnap and Cassirer on logical symbolism and semantics were only translated into English much later (Carnap in 1937, and Cassirer in 1953), we can assume that Empson was indeed very original, both theoretically and analytically. On the theoretical level, his departure from Richards starts with the definition of the language of poetry. According to Empson, the dualistic function of language does not appear as a difference between "symbolic" and "emotive" language, but happens in poetry as its special feature. Empson sees poetic language as a complex activity which transforms human emotions and feelings, and, at the same time, works as a synthesizer to change our relationship towards reality by the fusion of ideas, perceptions and images. However, the psychological substructure, with its hidden power of influence, is equally important to its linguistic counterpart, and, therefore, semantic analysis is actually a reverse process in comparison to the process of perception or comprehension. Obviously, Empson introduces a Freudian explanation to indicate how his methods of investigation work. Accordingly, the analyst's main concern is to find out the psychological implications of the meaning hidden in the poem, rather than to involve himself in experiencing all possible connotations of the poem's message. In other words, Empson's type of analysis does not mean analyzing the message of the poem, or looking to find out something about the personality of the author; his main concern is to trace the influence which the subconscious might have in our creating or comprehending the meaning of the words. Therefore, Empson is more interested in finding out what the real choice of meaning is, rather than to figure out why the choice was made. This leads towards the investigation of multiple combinations of possible meanings, rather than towards looking for the real meaning; and that is what the method of "seven ambiguities" is all about.

a) An Example of Applied Analysis for Creating New Theoretical Concepts

In regard to the assumption that Empson has followed in the footsteps of Bloomfield's linguistic tradition, it should be pointed out that saying this means claiming another departure from Richards' method of analysis. Empson never mentions Bloomfield in his first book, and there are only a few references to him in The Structure of Complex Words. However, the methods which were used in Empson's analysis of ambiguity, and later on in the essays on the special functions of words in Shakespeare's plays, indicate that his first inspiration was coming from Bloomfield rather than from Richards. Bloomfield's method of so-called "bracketing" the meaning in a particular linguistic unit was used once by Robert Graves and Laura Riding in Richards' class, which Empson was also attending at the same time as a student of mathematics.

To analyze some Shakespearean sonnets, Graves and Riding were experimenting by omitting the punctuation, changing the order of the words, and eliminating some of the elements in favor of others. This method of a new type of close reading turned out to be so successful that the authors very soon published two books, A Survey of Modernist Poetry (1927) and A Pamphlet Against Anthologies (1928), and both graduated with distinction from Professor Richards' class. The young Empson, at the time a twenty-one year-old undergraduate student of mathematics, was so impressed that, after being challenged during a discussion with Richards, he wrote the first draft of Seven Types of Ambiguity in a few weeks, and very soon he switched from mathematics to literature and linguistics.

It will be necessary to return to the discussion of Empson's concept of ambiguity later on in this chapter, but for the present time some other brief remarks are needed. Basically, Empson's idea for different types of ambiguity is a combination of Bloomfield's model for linguistic analysis (through the example of Robert Graves and Laura Riding), some principles of Freudian teachings, and Richards' theories of emotive language and communication. Before showing how Empson's method works in practice, it is necessary to point out some facts which are usually ignored when people speak about Empson. Two of these are of particular importance in this case. First of all, Empson was studying mathematics and only discovered the intricacies of Bloomfield's linguistics just prior to finding his major interest in literature as a critic and creative writer. Richards himself and Cambridge University were very well known for offering an excellent training in mathematics, logic, philosophy and linguistics. The Cambridge School of logical atomism with B. Russell as its leader is another form of logical positivism where Richards might also be classified. This should be of great significance for Empson, who, as a student of mathematics, but taking courses in literature, definitely had different ideas in approaching the linguistic model of "bracketing" than some fellow students without the same training in mathematics. Secondly, Graves' and Riding's experiments, omitting the punctuation, or deliberately changing the order of the words to see how that would affect the structure of the poems, had the strongest impact on Empson's theories of multiple meaning and on his analytical methods. On the other hand, here is the hidden reason for all the accusations against Seven Types of Ambiguity.

Empson's book was scandalous for all orthodox scholars. The first edition had more wrong quotations than right, and in spite of corrections in the later editions, many of these still remain. Nobody could understand why Empson quotes from facsimiles rather than from originally printed Shakespearean texts, why he proceeds to misspell, give wrong line numbers, cheats in punctuation, and even transposes the phrases. Famous are the examples of "The Canonization" and Eliot's "Whispers of Immortality", where Empson deliberately leaves out a line and punctuates the text differently so that the reader could not object to his interpretation. He copies "can I see" where Hood has "there can be", corrects Pope's "shivering" to "shuddering", Ben Jonson's "if he frown" becomes "when he frowns", Chaucer's "help" is Empson's "pray", and many more (STA, pp. 135, 153, 47, 90).

The list of Empson's manipulations and sloppy quotations is too long and too obvious to be taken as accidental. The academics and scholars were irritated. Some of them angrily objected that Empson did not show any respect for the text. However, they were wrong simply because there never had been an Empson before. Empson's arguments seem to be in the treatment of the analyzed text as a raw, alive material which fights back. It should be twisted and squeezed, squashed and mulled until it stops moving and biting back. For Empson the analysis is like taming the mule - one has to know when to show respect and when one is supposed to be tough. Empson does not misquote because he does not respect the text; on the contrary he respects the text too much. For him, the Shakespearean facsimiles have an almost mystic value. In reading them he feels like a prophet who is the only one who knows the holy words. Empson lives his literature. As a critic he is a creator; he sees too much, so that he becomes fascinated with everything that he sees. He corrects others, not because he wants to "cheat" or because he would like to correct them, but because his memory of lines fades out and he sees only what pleases him the most. He believes in his analysis because he feels a great love for the material. Empson's analyses are witty and astonishing, non-academic and intuitive. His interpretation of Shakespeare's sonnets may be very strained and inferior, but his readings of Spencer, Chaucer, of Donne's "Valediction of Weeping", of an eighteenth century poem, and of the central passage of "Tintern Abbey" are famous for their ingenuity. Generally, Empson is better when dealing with snippets and minor literature. His analysis of Hood, Peacock, or Zuleika Dobson are better than his analyses of Shakespeare, Pope or T.S. Eliot. He made detailed analyses of Shakespeare's versification, but most of his analyses are within the boundaries of T.S. Eliot's reading list. Everything that lies outside the framework of the New Critics' favorite three centuries (i.e. poetry of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries), becomes less important as an easy target for the strained verbal exercises. However, in spite of the fact that all these reasons might be quite convincing, there is a serious theoretical reason why Empson's analyses suffer from so many academic deficiencies.

First of all, theoretically, Empson is more interested in finding out the reasons for multiple meanings than in examining their real functioning in the poetic structure. Contrary to those scholars who believe in conceptual analysis, or that a certain amount of proper knowledge and information is necessary to provide us with an accurate picture of a work of art, Empson wants to feel free during the process of interpretation. Analytically, Empson approaches this problem by drawing a strict differential line between understanding poetry and interpreting poetry. The question of understanding poetry is the question of the relationship between the reader and the author of the poem. By its very nature, poetry is indeed independent from the mental habits of the reader, but its meaning is not. The relationship between the reader and the poem varies from case to case, and the reader should be able to extract from his own experience in order to explain both what is described by poetry, and the possibilities for its meaning. The reasons for ambiguities might then be threefold: first, on the level of the reader; then, on the level of the author; and finally, on the level of the poem itself. The conditions are defined by a specific relationship on each particular level, but in Seven Types of Ambiguity this relationship is explained differently. I shall discuss this later.

Analytically, Empson's interest in ambiguity leads naturally to a semantic analysis of the words, that is, to linguistic aspects of the words regardless of their place and role in the poetic structure. This happened in his book The Structure of Complex Words, in which Empson's fascination with words prevails against his interest in literature. Apparently, Empson's search for ambiguity in his earlier works had the same tendency, but this was then more or less disguised. The following example of Empson's analysis of the uses of two words in Shakespeare's plays shows more clearly how this method works.

b) The Analysis of the Uses of 'Honest' and 'Dog' in "Othello" and "Timon of Athens"

In 1937, Empson published two interesting analyses of Shakespeare's metaphors regarding the uses of the words "honest" (or "honesty") in Othello, and "dog" in Timon of Athens.[7] He found out that there are forty-eight (or fifty-two) different uses of the word "honest", and that whenever the word "dog" is used, the double meaning of the metaphor shifts the meaning in the play in a different direction. Besides intensifying the meaning of the play, or making it more complex, the metaphorical use of these two words shows that their major effect is at its best when a reversal of the ordinary meaning is needed or implied. The main point in Empson's analysis here, as it will be in the next book, The Structure of Complex Words, is to find the solution for a classical dilemma: Is there any meaning per se in a word, or is the meaning in the general purpose of those who use the word? In a series of essays on Shakespeare, Chaucer, Milton, the Metaphysical poets, Fielding and so on, Empson will try to examine the use of the English words, "honest" (with its variations honesty, honest man, honourable, generous, etc.; until the analysis ends in investigating all possible meanings, numbered as in a dictionary which he names "honest numbers" and examined in a separate and concluding essay), "fool", "all", "dog", "arch", "rogue", etc., in order to show how these words went through a cycle of slang or "emotive" uses (in his terms), from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. "The Best Policy" (and its revised version, "Honest in Othello") is an essay dealing only with the word "honest"; "Timon's Dog" is another one dealing with the word "dog", and both are the subject-matter of our analysis here.

Analytically, Empson's procedure is the reverse in comparison with his analysis of ambiguities. This time he knows in advance that there are many meanings waiting to be discovered, but his particular task is not now to find out the proper meaning of the words "honest" or "dog", nor is his intention to see how these two words affect a particular poetic structure or parts of that poetic structure. There were many cases of studies which classified and counted metaphors or particular words before Empson. The topic was not anything new and unusual, particularly in regard to studying Shakespeare or the Metaphysical poets (e.g., W. Knight, C. Spurgeon, R. Tuve, etc.). Empson openly admits that he is not interested either in the historical context or in the author's intentions regarding the play. He says:

> I shall try to show that Shakespeare is both presenting and refusing a set of feelings about dog as metaphor, making it in effect a term of praise, which were already in view and became a stock sentiment after the Restoration ('you young dog' and so on). It is a popular but tactfully suppressed grievance that Shakespeare did not love dogs as he should, and I think the topic is really a large one when you call a man a dog with obscure praise, or treat a dog as half-human, you do not much believe in the Fall of Man, you assume a rationalist view of man as the most triumphant of the animals. ("Timon's Dog", p. 24)

Similarly in his analysis of Othello, Empson tries to prove that there is an ironical overtone every time the word "honest" is used in the play, and that Shakespeare actually reverses the meaning of "honest" to "dishonest", even when the word is used to describe the positive characters of the play. He shows how the word changed historically from a word of general praise before lowering its dignity and reaching its new sense of disbelief and mistrust. From the original meaning which implied "generous" and "faithful to friends", the new meaning was to derive from the ambiguous sentence "frank to himself about his own desires" ("The Best Policy", pp. 6, 7). To prove his point, Empson uses the same method of elimination as Bloomfield had used in his bracketing the linguistic units.

First of all, Empson points out that Shakespeare never uses the word "honest" between equals. "Some low characters get near it, but they are made to throw in contempt", says Empson ("The Best Policy", p. 7). This creates a new dimension for the initial interpretation, according to which "honest" should be a simple opposition to "being truthful". Secondly, there is a strong idea of "manly" in honest, as well as the idea of irony when it is used to mean "dishonest" (i.e., "effeminate"). Empson illustrates this by the following example:

Oth: Is he not honest? (Faithful, etc.)

Iago: Honest, my lord? (Not stealing, etc. Shocked.)

Oth: Honest, Ay, honest. ('Why repeat? The word is clear enough.')

Iago: My Lord, for aught I know. ('In some sense . . .')

Iago: For Michael Cassio
I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.

Iago: Men should be what they seem,
Or those that be not, would they might seem none.

Oth: Certain, men should be what they seem.

Iago: Why then, I think Cassio's an honest man.

The above example is explained as a gradual change of meaning. Both Othello and Iago are aware of the fact that Cassio's social rank is much lower, and that he is younger and without experience. The conversation is supposed to provide the answer to the question: Is he 'not hypocritical' (i.e., is he trustworthy)? In other words, is he 'frank about his nature', or, is he a man? Shakespeare builds the effect of this scene based on two major moments in the speech of Iago. Once, when Iago hesitates ("for aught I know"), and then when he says that "men should be what they seem". Empson interprets these two moments in relation to the characters of both Iago and Cassio. It is important to say that Iago is also described as an "honest" man, and there is no need to question Othello's trust in Iago. Therefore, when Iago says that he knows more about Cassio, and given the fact that he knows Cassio is not what he seems to be, there is no need to question it. Ironically, Iago would agree that Cassio is an 'honest' man, but it is clear that he means honest in a different sense. Empson describes this as Cassio's honesty being "effeminate", that is, limited to being frank with friends and women. 'An honest dog of a fellow, straightforward about women', not specially manly to be chaste says Empson, using the Restoration idea of language and Iago's description of Cassio. (Ibid., p. 12)

A clearer case of honest being used in a female sense is related to Desdemona. Here again is Iago's comment:

> And what's he then that says I play the villain,
> When this advice I give free and honest,
> Probal to thinking, and indeed the course
> To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
> The inclining Desdemona to subdue
> In any honest suit. She's framed as fruitful
> As the free elements. . . .

Obviously, explains Empson, Iago does not have too positive an opinion of Desdemona. The adjectives used to describe her (easy, inclining, fruitful, free) all push the meaning of the word "honest" in the same way as the adjectives in the description of Cassio (chaste, flat, frank and natural). Desdemona calls Cassio "an honest fellow", which in her case means that he is on an inferior social rank. However, when Iago calls her "honest" that turns to be an ironical comment about her virtue, which he questions.

However, the chain of different connotations for the word "honest" does not stop here. The crucial point is that all the characters, regardless of their rank (including Iago himself), call Iago "an honest man". Empson's method of elimination of one meaning in favor of the other is again consistently used. Evidently, Iago is not "honest" in the same sense as Cassio, Desdemona or Othello. His type of "honesty" starts where the others ended. There is no doubt in Empson's mind that Iago's honesty is not the Restoration one (i.e., the upper class talking about the lower class as 'an honest fellow of a dog'), nor a shift in meaning to describe the opposite (dishonest), nor various versions of sense from not being manly to not telling the truth (which should be distinguished from 'being hypocritical'), etc.

Empson interprets Iago's "honesty" using three classical questions about Iago's function and behavior in the play:

(1) Is Iago dishonest because he is lying, or does he lie because he is not honest?

(2) Does the question of honesty and dishonesty depend on the analysis of Iago's character, or on the function which Iago's character has in the structure of the whole play?

(3) Most critics would agree that Iago's behavior is dictated by the structure of the play, rather than saying that Iago dictates the behavior of the other characters. Certainly, there is a curious ambiguity in the motivation of Iago's behavior which creates a dilemma: Is Iago always the same, or has he changed? Was he once honest, and later, under the circumstances, he became dishonest, or does he only appear to be honest, but actually was always dishonest?

Obviously, there is a certain conflict of interest in answering these questions, particularly because the answer would definitely dictate how the play itself should be interpreted. Empson was right when he concluded that, regardless of the reasons for Iago's behavior, the first step should be to compare how Iago and the other characters perceive Iago's honesty. Because, if Iago is supposed to be a villain, and nobody questions it (on the contrary, even Othello believes sincerely in Iago's honesty), therefore, there must be another reason why Iago's behavior should correspond to the main course of the play. Empson explains this as a paradoxical situation; in spite of the fact that it might sound quite unbelievable, actually Iago never lies about his own personality, nor does he ever try to be different than he is. According to Empson, Iago is fully aware of the limitations of his honesty (cf. "As honeste as I am"; or "I confess, it is my nature's plague / To spy . . ."). The new question is: if Iago does not lie, and we agree that his character is structured to function as a villain in the play, how are we to describe his honesty within his functioning in the play? If the other characters never question Iago's honesty, the conclusion is twofold. Either Iago changed; i.e., maybe he was once honest and still lives on his previous reputation, which would make him dishonest for constantly trying to present himself as he was in the past; or Iago's behavior is dictated by some hidden reasons and desires such as envy, jealousy, hurt feelings, power hunger, etc. Empson explains this in the following way: Iago "feels himself really 'honest' as the kind of man who can see through nonsense" (op. cit., p. 14). This is true: he can avoid feeling Othello's lust, but also to avoid Cassio's weakness, or Desdemona's social snobbery as well.

Iago's kind of honest . . . is not valued as it should be, there is much in Iago of the Clown in Revolt, Empson summarizes his opinion. Everyone misjudges Iago because nobody takes what he says seriously. Desdemona thinks that Iago's opinion about love and woman is "a piece of hearty and good-natured fun". Iago himself gives the reasons why his honesty is not directly expressed: "To be direct and honest, is not safe"; and "Ile loue no friend, sith love breeds such offence", or "I should be wise; for Honestie's a Foole / And loses that it works for". The paradox that comes out here is Iago's unwillingness to be taken for a fool, but the dramatic irony is that he fails in his plans and is fooled by the way that the other characters perceive him. Empson analyzes in detail many other examples to prove that the relationship between Iago and the other heroes in the play is based on this misunderstanding: Iago is telling the truth, but for personal reasons, everyone interprets his words according to some individual motive. For instance, when Iago says that "to be direct and honest is not safe", he means "direct and honest" as Othello. But when he says "I should be wise, for Honestie's a Foole" he is talking about himself and Othello misinterprets that as talking about him and saying that he will lose Desdemona because he is a fool. Following this logic, Othello will conclude that his wife is not honest, and he will repeat interpreting this conversation in the same way later on, when speaking to Emilia.

By a detailed analysis of the words and expressions used by Iago in his communication with the other characters of the play, Empson successfully proves that the reversal of meaning of certain words contributes to the ambiguity of the play. However, Empson also provides enough arguments for his hypothesis that there is "linguistic difference between what Shakespeare meant by Iago and what the nineteenth century critics saw in him". He disagrees with those critics who took Iago "as an abstract term 'Evil', because for Empson Iago is rather "a critique on an unconscious pun" ("The Best Policy", p. 21).

In his study of the various metaphors of dog in "Timon of Athens", Empson has a different task. Although he does speak again about the reversal of meaning and the use of the word "dog" in the positive sense of a term of praise as the word was used after the Restoration (cf. Erasmus, in The Praise of Folly, where 'flattery' was not used as a mere lying but belonged to the valuable kind of fool, and because a fool was compared to a young dog, flattery meant being faithful to a master), Empson introduces a more complex mechanism of analysis here. To distinguish the various aspects of function and meanings of the word "dog", he speaks about four kinds of "symbols" which occur in metaphor.[9]

The first one occurs in so-called "normative" or "pregnant" metaphor as the full blast of symbolism, where metaphorical dogs (i.e., men) have the characteristics of humans, being villains and honest at the same time. This is the case of dog-praise as well, because on one end of the scale there is Apemantus as a dog flatterer and on the other is Timon as a cynic (pariah) dog. Sometimes, there is a paradox such as when Timon calls the cynic a flatterer, but generally there is a distinction between the features of men ('honest' as a positive quality, but 'cynical' as a negative quality). This conflict of judgment appears as a "double symbol", and if it implies a way of reconciling the contradiction, it represents a third type and occurs as "master symbol". The main difference between the second type (i.e., double symbol) and the third type (i.e., master symbol) is that the latter consists of both the reconciling contradiction in the word and the doctrine of the author which is felt as absorbed in the whole style, but appears whenever he uses this key word. On the contrary, a double symbol does not carry the meaning of the author's doctrine, and if it might suggest a contradiction between the two meanings, this contradiction is never reconciled. "Dog" in Timon is then a double symbol, but not a master symbol, claims Empson. As an example of the fourth type, Empson only mentions that there are very elaborate kinds of equations which, if compared to the third type equations, represent a pair of rival pregnancies. Therefore, there is a master symbol of the fourth kind of metaphor which is a pair of rival pregnancies, and there is a double symbol which is a pair of rival third type equations. Empson's theorizing is not quite clear here because the concept of the master symbol appears in two different types, the third and fourth, but the distinction between the third and the fourth types is based on the distinction between a double symbol and a master symbol. Secondly, suddenly the concept of the double symbol occurs as "a pair of rival third type equations", but a double symbol is already defined as a conflict of judgments, which is the characteristic of the second type of metaphor. The only logical explanation for this confusion is that Empson wrote and added this theorizing to the second, revised edition of the essay "Timon's Dog" in order to classify all cases of analyzed metaphors which he made in the first edition. He was not overly satisfied with the scheme of metaphorical dogs (i.e., metaphors of men as dogs) and actual dogs (i.e., metaphors of dogs as men), which indeed implied positive and negative senses of the word "dog", but created confusion by the "natural" and "unnatural" symbolism of dogs.

However, the major deficiency of Empson's analysis in "Timon's Dog" is a lack of really clear ideas and the purpose of analyzing the metaphors of dogs. In comparison with the function of "honest" in "Othello", "dog" in "Timon" plays a really small role and does not affect the characterization of the heroes of the play. Running short of examples, Empson is forced to substitute the analysis of "dogs" with the analysis of words such as "honest", "fool", etc. Since they are not significantly related to the function of the word "dog", nor do they have any importance for the total meaning of the play, their validity for serious interpretation is quite questionable.

II. PSYCHOLOGISM AND EMPSON'S CONTEXT THEORY

1) Freudian Implications in Empson's Theory of Contextual Meaning

According to Empson's context theory, which occurs in Seven Types of Ambiguity,[10] there are three major pre-conditions for forming the meaning of any statement:

(1) The meaning depends on the context or fact stated in any particular discourse.

(2) The second condition concerns the person or so-called addressee to whom the statement is addressed.

(3) And the last condition is determined by the purpose; i.e., why any particular statement is addressed to someone.

It is interesting to mention that Empson did not include the speaker in this almost classical scheme of the theory of communication. According to his approach, the first element (context) conditions the kind of statement, the other two (both the purpose and the person) are important as conditions for ambiguity. Stating the same fact, one can make another sentence; it depends only on the purpose and the wish of the person who explains the facts. The explainer is not necessarily the person to whom the statement is addressed, but the differences in explanation can be described as a difference between thought and feeling in which the explainer's purpose is always subordinated to the interpretation of the person to whom the statement is addressed. Empson thinks that the implications of this kind are the real subject of literary criticism. According to him, an apprehension of the sentence involves the meaning of the facts (i.e., context), and the understanding of the meaning as corresponding to the explainer's purpose. Contradictory associations to the initial statement are a condition for ambiguity in the reader's apprehension. However, Empson is more clear in his example of differences between the ambiguities of ordinary speech and those of poetry.

Metaphors are very similar to poetic ambiguity, says Empson, because every language consists of numberless dead metaphors, and our speech is always metaphorical, even if we do not want it to be so. In virtue of this, one may say that each ambiguity is a kind of subdued or dead metaphor, but, at the same time, it is also true that there are clear poetic metaphors without any trace of ambiguity, and, consequently, every metaphorical speech is not supposed to be treated as ambiguous automatically. At this point Empson introduces Herbert Read's definition of metaphor as the synthesis of several units of observation into one commanding image and the expression of a complex idea by a sudden perception of an objective relation (STA, p. 20).

The ambiguity of metaphor occurs as something hiding in the receiver's mind. This pre-condition can be described as a kind of self-awareness about the stated facts, with its own secret impulses which create the meaning. Each comparison or metaphorical speech consists of two important elements of comparison: the subject and the object. Similarities between the subject and the object of comparison create the pre-condition for metaphor; their differences are a reason for the ambiguity of the first type. The ambiguity of the second type is determined by syntax, consciousness and psychological complexity. A feature, common to all types regardles of their particular characteristics, can be described as a psychological disorder in the poet's mind during the creative process, and it occurs as a conflicting situation, creating a split-division and inability to make a proper choice (or to understand) about the real meaning of the poem. In other words, this means that Empson distinguishes two kinds of meaning: logical and psychological. From here to utilizing Freud there was only one step.

Explicitly, Empson mentions Freud only once in The Structure of Complex Words, and twice in Some Versions of Pastoral. In spite of the fact that many of his analyses bear the mark of the obvious Freudian influence (searching for the hidden meaning through the conflict between unconsciousness and consciousness), and that three out of seven types of ambiguity are directly based on the Freudian principles (the second, fourth and seventh type), Empson never admitted the importance of Freudian theories for his own speculations. As a matter of fact, all other types of ambiguity are in one way or another connected either to the Freudian theory of language, or to his theory of dreams; to the psychopathology of everyday life, or to principles of substitutes and compensation, etc. Aside from the seventh chapter of Seven Types of Ambiguity, Empson never speaks directly about Freud. He neglects to acknowledge a direct influence, probably because his psychological contextualism obviously does not follow the footsteps of the classical form of so-called Freudian psychoanalysis, nor is it close to Richards' version of positivistic psychologism.

In the "Preface to the Second Edition" of Seven Types of Ambiguity (1947), Empson responds to the criticism of his psychologism, rejecting in particular the influence of Freud. Freud was mentioned directly in the first edition only in the seventh chapter speaking about ambiguity based on the conflict of ideas in the author's mind. Empson's reaction was: "I want now to express my regret that the topical interest of Freud distracted me from giving adequate representation in the seventh chapter to the poetry of straightforward mental conflict, perhaps not the best kind of poetry, but one in which our own age has been very rich." (*STA*, p. 9) As one can see, Empson regrets that he was not able to offer more "adequate representation . . . to the poetry of straightforward mental conflict", but he admits his interest in Freud, in spite of his previous claim that "the last type of ambiguity was not concerned with neurotic disunion but with a fully public theological poem". However, in spite of the fact that these types of contradictions are a part of Empson's proceeding, and that he does think that those are only minor controversies which could not affect his approach in general, the use of Freudian principles in the seventh chapter shows clearly where the roots of Empson's understanding of the nature of poetic language rest. According to Empson's definition, the seventh type of ambiguity occurs when the two meanings are so opposite and definitive by context that *the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer's mind*. (*STA*, p. 224)

As Ogden and Richards in *The Meaning of Meaning*,[11] Empson explains this situation by comparison with primitive languages. Accordingly, in poetry words have the same function as in primitive languages. In both cases, the principle of opposition is used to express thoughts and feelings. Sometimes even the same word consists of two opposite meanings, and the main criteria for the emphasizing of only one meaning has to be psychological rather than logical. For example, if we say "2 percent white" this would mean at the same time a very black shade of gray. Olson objected to this explanation,[12] but Empson actually goes back to the Freudian analysis of dreams. Freud explains that the function of opposites is to condense dissatisfactions. As in the case of the joint authors, Ogden and Richards, the emotional reverberation of words is the most important question for William Empson, and he tries to examine how this manifestation or activity of language is reflected in poetry; but, in this case, he is interested in the examination of poetry as the resolution of a conflict. Empson's investigations of all kinds of dictionary definitions show how poetical analysis can sometimes be absurd. The process of the examination of words in this way can be very interesting, but it does not contribute much to a better understanding of poetry.

According to Empson's study of Freud, there are two kinds of manifestations of the seventh type of ambiguity. He mentions the first one, the case of the opposites which produce a conflict in the author's mind, but the second manifestation occurs as confusion in the statement by negation of words. These two manifestations are very similar, and, as a matter of fact, Empson does not insist so much on their difference, as he insists on their connection with the Freudian theory of dreams.

One of the basic Freudian categories is Libido, or the sexual wish. Likewise, in Freudian terminology, the complex forms of communication are seen as a sublimation of wishes (or instincts).

Psychoanalysis also talks of purposive forgetting, particularly if the Ego is stronger and controls the unconscious part of the mind. Thus, this can cause a lot of conflict between the Ego and Libido. On the other hand, in his book Psychopathology of Everyday Life, Freud claims that there are no facts or information which can be given by chance. For example, if we say any number, it must be always linked with something in our unconsciousness which we forgot, or that we want to forget. There is no chance that we might say a number which cannot be connected with our past life, our childhood, or something hidden in our mind. For instance, the number can be a part of some very important date, which we usually want to forget because it is something very unpleasant, negative, and frustrating to us.

So all forms of communication are the sublimation of our unconsciousness, and this is very similar to Empson's general idea of conditions for ambiguity. This is the reason that, in the first chapter, Empson says that ambiguity is something hidden in our mind, because he believes that ambiguity depends on the type of conflicts developed either in the reader or in the author's mind. The belief that ambiguity is a hidden meaning in each word is indeed based on the Freudian teachings about involuntary slips of the tongue, as well as on the unconscious lapses, errors and omissions in ordinary speech.

The fundamental elements of the Freudian interpretation of dreams are "condensation" and "displacement", but Freud uses the two terms as overall categories also in his analysis of the poem as a dream. The terms are really two different approaches to the same phenomenon. Condensation, we might say, deals with the ways in which "house" in a dream may be more than "house", or "house plus". A displacement deals with the way in which "house" may be other than "house", or "house minus".13 Empson says the same when he discusses the opposites. The early Egyptians wrote the same sign for "young" and "old", and Empson claims:

> When a primitive Egyptian saw a baby he at once thought of an old man, and had to learn not to do this as his language became more civilized. This certainly shows the process of attaching a word to an object as something extraordinary; nobody would do it if his language did not make him; and if one considers the typical proposition which can be applied to a baby, other than those as to its age, the opposite applies less to an old man than to a man in the prime of life. Evidently there are two ways in which such a word could be constructed. It may mean, for instance, 'no good for soldiers, because of age'; it may have been thought of in connection with some idea which regarded the very young and the very old in the same way. Thus one speaks of the two ends of the stick, though from another point of view one of them must be the beginning. Or it may be important to remember that the notion of age excites conflict in almost all who use it; between recognizing the facts about oneself, and feeling grown-up or feeling still young and strong. (STA, pp. 227-228)

This quoted passage is the best example to show how Empson makes a mistake in his conclusions. Starting with the idea that there must be a conflict between the connotation and denotation of words, he mixes up the implication and meanings of words. Even when the early Egyptians used the same sign for "young" and "old", they did not think about both meanings at the same time, and we do not know whether they used two different words in the spoken form of their language. Also, it is not clear why this can be a reason for confusion, because we know that we use synonyms in ordinary speech only in one meaning, and we know exactly what we want to express, even if we use a word with many meanings. The same is true in poetry also, and though each poet uses words by chance or on purpose, he does not intend to imply all possible meanings, except when he wants to confuse the reader on purpose.

Empson's basic hypothesis about the opposition between thought and feeling is completely acceptable if we think about the possibilities of clear and understandable communication, and he is absolutely right when he tries to clear up this phenomenon as well as possible; as he does in the later text "Emotions in Poem", or in the book The Structure of Complex Words.[14]

In Seven Types of Ambiguity Empson tries to prove that this opposition between thought and feeling implies also conflict in the structure of statement. He speaks about different degrees of complexity of meaning and he says that the reader's business is to extract the useful meaning or to ignore the meanings he thinks foolish. The seventh type of ambiguity involves both the anthropological idea of the opposite and the psychological idea of context. However, when Empson discusses different kinds of opposites, he is more successful, such as in examples of the religious and sexual implications of the meaning in some of Crashaw's and Herbert's lines, because it is obvious that this kind of "conflict" can be more realistic and convincing than if we speak about it in the scope of linguistics.

Starting with the idea that there must be some logical conflict between the denotary and connotatory sense of words, or between a negation of the importance of association and necessary emphasis or their importance in the analysis of literary works, Empson strives to prove that the factor of ambiguity can be the main factor in a literary work. Empson's orientation towards the psychological element rather than the aesthetic one is motivated by the use of value judgments going to the extent of extremes. Empson supposes not only that there is always some conflict among different kinds of meaning, but that the question of ambiguity is the question of criticism and poetic language. This conflict exists also as opposition between thought and feeling, but poetry is an emotive language which we understand and perceive by associations. Therefore, logic plays a minor part in our comprehension of poetry. Empson says:

> People remember a complex notion as a sort of feeling that involves facts and judgments; one cannot give or state the feeling directly, any more than the feeling of being able to ride a bicycle; it is a result of capacity, though it might be acquired perhaps by reading a list. But to state the fact and the judgment (the thought and the feeling) separately, as two different relevant matters, is a bad way of suggesting how they are combined; it makes the reader apprehend as two things what he must, in fact, apprehend as one thing. Detailed analysis of this kind might be excellent as psychology, but it would hardly be literary criticism; it would start much further back; and a reader of the poem would have to read a grat deal of it to get the information he wanted. (STA, p. 275)

In this passage, Empson polemicized with Richards in order to sum up certain postulates for his own theory of criticism. He is aware that there must be some coherency and unity in the complex structure of a literary work, but he thinks that this unity is ambiguity. This seems to be a paradoxical conclusion, but Empson has arrived to it in a very logical way. He started with Richards' theory of poetry as a form of communication, but he emphasized different factors as the most important. According to Empson, apart from the importance of knowing how the creating of literary works happened, the major task of criticism is to show what is likely to happen (and why) in the reader's mind, because this means reversing the process of creation.

If we accept that we think not in words but in directed phrases, and if we agree that there is a conflict, contradiction, opposition or disagreement between our thought and feeling in such a kind of statement (although, it can be harmony, coherence, and agreement at the same time), we could accept that some alternative and obscure meaning obviously exists in every kind of poetry (although this kind of multiplicity can also have another source of reason). Also, if we point out that the "function" of ambiguity is to unify all opposite and contradictory elements, we must, in this case, accept Empson's reasons as well.

2) Emotions and Feelings

Empson was to return to the topic of emotions and feelings in poetry in the essays "Emotions in Poetry", "Feelings in Words", "Statements in Words" and "Sense and Sensibility", all written in the early 1950's.[15] All these essays deal with Richards' Emotive Theory of language, and represent the classical example of the New Critics' treatment of the subject matter (i.e., the New Critics' concepts of emotive and cognitive as an opposition to Richards' concepts of true and false statements; or poetic images against symbols; a distinction between emotions and feelings instead of emotions and thoughts; etc.). Since there are many aspects as to how this topic can be approached, and it has already been discussed how Empson did it in regard to the contextual meaning and seven types of ambiguity, we shall now discuss the psychological aspects of this problem.

In spite of the fact that Richards' position was not the same in his later works, Empson prefers to refer to the Emotive doctrine based on the Ogden-Richards Meaning of Meaning, an earlier version of Richards' views. According to the early doctrine, there is a flat separation of Sense from Emotions, based on the initial desire to disentangle the Emotive from the Cognitive part of the poetic language.[16] The authors claim that literary metaphors are Essentially Emotive, and in a Pure Emotive Language (i.e., poetry), the Sense need not be considered. In the books of the middle period,[17] Richards extended the Emotive Theory, introducing two additional principles: first, the function of poetry is to call out an Attitude which is independent of any belief; and then, in opposition to science, poetry consists of pseudo-statements which are entirely governed by feelings and attitudes, and independent of any logic or truth. In other words, apart from the separation of sense from Emotions,[18] there is a separation of Attitude from Belief, and Pseudo-statements from Logic and Truth.

Empson's objections to Richards' Emotive Theory are based on the principles of Bloomfield's linguistics: besides linguistic meaning, there is also logical meaning in each word; i.e., there are many uses of a single word, and they are part of the so-called "connotation", but in a particular case only one meaning is implied by the logic of that case. This meaning Empson calls Implication, trying to explain its function by comparison to Sense and Emotion. The term Implication should suggest that sometimes the meaning is implied" rather than being present in a Sense of the word, but because it comes "from an habitual context of the word (not from its inherent meaning)", the Implication can be 'translated' to an emotion. Furthermore, Emotion and Implication are tied so that each calls up the other. (SCW, p. 15)

However, there are certain elements in a word which are not emotions, or even necessarily connected with emotions. According to Empson, these elements are often called "feelings", and they stand for determining or coloring the contextual meaning. Speaking about context, Empson says:

> The context is presumed to be usual among some groups of people; a merely private fancy would be called an Association of the word. Of course the immediate context of the use of the word now in view may also be felt to 'imply' the extra meaning, and indeed will commonly support the habit of giving the word this Implication by providing another example of it. But one case alone would not produce a stock implication. Sometimes the word itself in most of its uses will as it were logically imply the extra meaning; I should think this is true of honest implying 'courage'; but even so, past experience is what makes the word able to point it out. And we do not necessarily attend to past experience; nowadays the implication of 'courage' in honesty is I think rather a remote one, though it would be a strong one if the logical implications from past contexts merely added themselves up. (SCW, pp. 15-16)

This passage is extremely important for understanding both Empson's Context Theory and the fundamentals of his concept of meaning. Unlike Richards, Empson does not believe in a predetermined meaning of words. This was known already in Seven Types of Ambiguity, but his complex description of context as a view or experience usually shared by a group of people; his definition of the Association experience shared by one person and his categories of contexts (immediate context, or the one depending on either a present or past experience), are completely new explanations for the old concepts. Many critics, in particular

Elder Olson and Rosemond Tuve,[19] pointed out that two major deficiencies occur frequently in Empson's analytical methods. One is that Empson does not distinguish between the implied or intended meaning and possible or apparent meaning; and the other one is that he ignores the differences between the present and past (i.e., historical) meaning of the words. Obviously, here Empson wanted to answer his detractors, introducing the concept of Implication and three different kinds of contexts. Unfortunately, in practice, Empson continues to deal with all possible meanings according to the New Oxford English Dictionary, prefering the contemporary connotation even in the cases when the use of the historical meaning would prove that the author meant something totally different than it might at first seem. However, there is a third objection which can be addressed to Empson, maybe even more serious than the other two. After Seven Types of Ambiguity, Empson shifts the focus of his attention from interpreting ambiguities to investigating the function of single words in a particular literary work (cf. the analyzing of 'honest' in Othello or 'dog' in Timon, 'fool' in King Lear, etc.). The real objection is that by choosing the topic of his interpretation Empson displays an unhistorical concern with so-called "amphibolies" (i.e., the usage of an unrepeated word in at least two senses, as in a double entendre)[20] and creating an artificial ambiguity whose presence can be justified only by the number of occurrences in the text. For example, if the word 'honest' occurs fifty-two times in its variations, including 'honesty' ('honour' and 'honourable' as well, if needed), in order to have a legitimately established analysis, this word must have a special structural status and importance which would fully justify its choice. Repetetiveness might be sometimes a good enough reason for analysis, but in many cases it has no significance whatsoever. For instance, there might be some structural reasons why Shakespeare utilizes the word 'fool' so often in King Lear, or 'honest' in Othello, but speaking about 'dog' in Timon, of 'all' in Paradise Lost means so little from a pure literary point of view. The number of times that a word appears in a literary work is quite arbitrary and does not have anything to do with the construction and organization of the literary elements in a particular literary structure. When it really has a special status, that would be reflected already on the larger scale and in other ways as well.

Taking into account all these remarks, Empson's arguments about different kinds of contextual meanings and his distinction between "emotions" and "feeling" are not satisfactory enough to solve the problem of the role which the meaning should play in literary interpretation. His passing remark that "feelings" are what is behind "emotions" resembles very much his definition of ambiguity as something hidden in a word. In other words, in both cases, Empson is looking for "psychological" meaning; that is, the meaning which is conditioned by the context, by the listener and by the purpose, as Empson defined it in Seven Types of Ambiguity, making the reader responsible for the way in which the literary work should be read. This tendency of Empson's to claim a complete freedom of interpretation, was disputed the most by scholars, but understood by creative writers. It seems that Empson implicitly wanted to say that the question is not whether there is one or more interpretations of the literary work, but that any interpretation is good if it is convincingly enough written to be logically accepted. If it is possible to seriously study how many children Lady Macbeth has had, then there is no reason why someone could not take all precautions to sound convincing in studying how many times the word "honest" occurs in Shakespeare's plays.

a) The Analysis of 'Alice in Wonderland'

When Empson published *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935), everyone expected a continuation of *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, at least on the level of interpreting poetic images, if not on that of ambiguities. In spite of a certain controversy of the previous kind, the book was more or less very traditional in its topics and structural analysis. Dealing with prose was not the same as dealing with poetry, in spite of some provocative questions and some unusual definitions. The book shows that Empson wanted to avoid attacks and polemics, so there are no more theoretical speculations or explanatory theorizing. With few exceptions, the book inclines more towards the analysis of details as its single issue, reflecting Empson's interests at the time: Marxism, Freud, structural analysis, linguistics. Although there is nothing to resemble the best known principles of the New Criticism, i.e., a literary work should be analyzed as a whole; no detail should be isolated as representative of the whole; analyzing the poem as poetic discourse, etc., the book still consists of a few excellent literary interpretations.

Secondly, in spite of the fact that Freud was always present implicitly if not explicitly, in Empson's treatment of literature until

Some Versions of Pastoral, in "Alice in Wonderland: The Child as Swain", Empson never made a real psychoanalytical reading of the text. Empson's first Freudian analysis is considered to be one of his finest interpretations, but, paradoxically enough, it still bears the mark of those analytical methods used in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. To distinguish between the old and the new methods would be a quite difficult task. Old concepts are usually well disguised behind new terminology, and trying to classify all of them would lead virtually nowhere. Empson's definition of pastoral is quite unorthodox, as well as is his choice of examples. His main concern still is to look for the hidden meaning: irony, paradox and a general reversal of the meaning is once again the focus of his attention.

Empson is aware that Lewis Carroll's *Adventures of Alice in Wonderland* is easily translatable in Freudian terms, because the book is about growing up and it is full of symbols of sexuality and 'uncontrolled animal passion': the Queen of Hearts, for instance.[21] He claims that as regards Freud, his interest is in the 'subconscious' parts of the book and how they reflect in the most spontaneous and poetic parts of the book. Since his definition of pastoral here is quite open to a study of neurosis - using the device prior to irony, pastoral *makes covert judgments about any matter the author was interested in*[22] - Empson attempts to adjust this definition to his needs. Interested not so much in Freud as in a search for the reversal of the meaning, i.e., contextual meaning or ambiguities, Empson decides to study the transformation of the child, which is presented, according to his understanding, on two levels. First, the basic formula is 'child-become-judge', and secondly, there is also a twofold identification of Lewis Carroll with the child, and "the writer of the primary sort of pastoral with his magnified version of the swain". (*SVP*, p. 254) Since this transformation develops in several different stages, Empson selects only the scenes which consist of a more direct reference to evolution and growing up, making comparisons with similar scenes in other authors.

For instance, a reference to Darwinism occurs in the scene when Alice gets out of the bath of tears. It is clear, says Empson, that the salt water is the sea from which life arose; and as a bodily product it is also the amniotic fluid, ontogeny repeats phylogeny; there is "the disturbing head of a monkey" and an extinct bird here; and the whole Noah's Ark gets out of the sea with Alice. (*SVP*, p. 255) Furthermore, we are back to the history of the species in the scene with the Mouse and the Conqueror, and the questions of race which turn into the questions of breeding and there are obscure snubs for people who like to boast about their ancestors. The Caucus Race is the reference to local politics, which represents "running when you like and leave off when you like" but still all win, and the absurdity of democracy cannot do anything to stop the Natural Selection, which is another absurdity. But there is double symbolism here. All animals win, but Alice as a Man, supposedly superior, has to give them comfits. They give her her own elegant thimble, the symbol of her labor, because she has won too. But because she is of the highest rank, she shall be the servant of all. Alice would prefer a more aristocratic system because she is ridiculed and discomfited. Politically-minded scientists are also ridiculed for their preaching progress through 'selection'. And there are other political allusions in pointing to laissez-faire and the anarchy of Christ, in the scene of the Looking-Glass to Disraeli, to Tory members and the Crown, to the Romans and Huxley's lecture of 1893, to the Pope, King Frederick, and so on (SVP, pp. 255- 259 et passim).

However, Empson is more interested in Carroll's (or Dodgson's, as he prefers to call Lewis Carroll) strange mixture of Kafkean symbolism and self-consciousness, which are particularly pertinent in the scene of the Looking-Glass. He makes references to Mother Goose's Melodies (John Newbury, 1760), comparing a children's song about Tom Tinker's Dog with a mock pastoral, Amphion's Song of Eurydice. Alice is a 'little rogue', like children who sing a song about the dog. She is "loving as a dog . . . and gentle as a fawn, then courteous, - courteous to all, high and low, grand and grotesque, King or Caterpillar . . . trustful, with an absolute trust", says Empson quoting from Carroll's book. He points out that Alice represents a child which "has not yet been put wrong by civilization" and refers to Wordsworth's child symbolism in Ode to Intimations and Coleridge's point in We are Seven. According to Empson, Carroll envies Alice, who is sexless here, not being a grown-up yet. She is often taken for the underdog speaking up for itself, but the main suggestion is that there is more in the child than any man has been able to keep (SVP, pp. 259, 260, 261). Empson continues to compare the imagery of the child in Wordsworth, in Romantic literature in general, and the imagery in the Victorian period with Carroll's Alice. The same sentiment of the unity of child with nature exists in Carroll's work as in Wordsworth's, but Carroll makes a joke about Wordsworth, parodying Wordsworth in the poem about the White Knight and in the scene about the inventions of new foods. As a wine-taster to College, Carroll suspects the High Table of over-eating. Food and over-eating are definitely Freudian concepts of sexuality, and as a child Alice feels a fear of sensuality when she boasts about having dinner instead of saying that it was only lunch. The Swiftian idea of talking animals and of changing the relative size of everything is different than in Carroll's book. Swift uses it for a satire on science: by changing size in *Gulliver*, the author makes you see things that otherwise are not possible to see as they are in themselves; the idea that men seem small means that they are spiritually petty, and seen larger means that they are loathsome physically. Carroll's idea of changing size, the same as the idea of Alice falling through a hole in the earth, the eating scene, and in particular the conversation at the table when Alice realized that all poems are about *fish*, all of this is about children becoming grown-ups and finding out about sex and sensuality. Alice arrives at a piece of *knowledge*; the trial is meant to be a mystery; she has to leave the court because as a child; she *ought not to hear the evidence, and yet they expect her to give evidence herself*. Here is that scene:

> 'What do you know about this business?' the King said to Alice.
>
> 'Nothing,' said Alice.
>
> 'Nothing *whatever?*' persisted the King.
>
> 'Nothing whatever,' said Alice.

> 'That's very important,' said the king to the jury. They were just beginning to write this down on their slates, when the White Rabbit interrupted: 'UNimportant, your Majesty means, of course,' he said in a very respectful tone, but frowning and making faces as he spoke.
>
> 'UNimportant, of course, I meant,' the King hastily said, and went on to himself in an undertone, 'important-unimportant-unimportant-important-' as if he were trying which word sounded best.

Empson analyzes this scene as Carroll's attempt to keep Alice innocent of all knowledge of grown-ups. She is not supposed to know what the Knave of Hearts (a flashy-looking lady's man) was doing, but she should not be told that she is innocent, and that is why the King is embarrassed. The refusal to let her stay makes her revolt and break the dream, in spite of her thinking 'it does not matter a bit' (a word the jury wrote down). But this is also a topic about death, and as in the poem about the *Looking-Glass*, where the marriage-bed is the grave, here is the connotation of dying incorporated in the idea of growing up, finding out things and becoming aware of your own sensuality. Although Empson was only joking on the account of Carroll, admitting that the conflict or connection between death and the development of sex is not the major point in Carroll's presentation of growing up, he finds many examples of Freudian symbolism involved in the imagery about birth and re-birth.

For instance, the caterpillar, who gives to Alice a magic control over her growth, is a creature that has to die to become a grown-up. Its being a butterfly also implies that Alice is going to grow up as she would move from being a pawn to becoming a queen, and the governess is going to shrink to a kitten so that Alice can shake her. This is the theme of revenge and re-birth. The dream-story, falling through the deep hole into the secrets of Mother Earth, being big and incapable of getting out, and so on, all of this is the birth-trauma. Carroll wants to say that it is painful and dangerous to be a grown-up; his message to Alice is to stay a little girl. To choose between two Queens is like choosing between moral superiority with painful isolation and an intellectual way of life, which is also a life of chastity, or choosing its opposite. Empson admits that there is a lot of mockery going on here, but he also points out that certain words have different meanings for Carroll and for us. The child-cult depends not only on Carroll's distaste for sexuality, but also for a rich emotional life. Victorian ideas of passion did not have anything to do with sex, but with Christ, and a reference to the thorns of the roses on the Queen's head, and also to the Tiger-Lily as a Passion Flower are references to the ideal passion which means alarming fierceness (chaste till now) and the ill-temper of the life of virtue and self-sacrifice typified by the governess (chaste always). Empson analyzes Carroll's satirical verses against babies, emotions and the White Queen involved in the Sex-War. He emphasizes Carroll's obscure obsession and the belief of the period that a really nice girl is 'delicate', 'pale' and 'ill'. They say that to be refined, woman must be made ill; and to become desirable, she is supposed to look corpse-like. By growing up, little girls lose their name and their personality; they should eat less, and learn nothing. Flamingos, mustard and pepper are 'ill-tempered'; they bite, and this is a sexual connotation. Therefore, little girls should eat weak and mild food. When the three little sisters were wrongly accused of living on treacle, Alice said: 'They couldn't have done that you know, they'd have been ill.' 'So they were,' said the Dormouse, 'very ill.'

Empson finds a whole series of explanations for this small detail: everyone is self-centered and argumentative; they stand for the detachment of the intellect from emotion, potential danger and warning what little girls should not be doing, a pathetic example of a martyrdom to the conventions, etc. Similarly, the famous smiling cat represents "a very direct symbol of this ideal of intellectual detachment; all cats are detached, and since this one grins it is the amused observer". (SVP, p. 273) This and many other of Empson's remarks are interesting, but in most cases his analysis is incomplete or based on comparisons and logical conclusions instead of on arguments from the text. He is better at interpreting small details than in giving overall pictures of situations or groups of symbols in regard to Carroll and the book itself. This is the main reason that Empson's trip to Freudian analysis is not always very successful, or at least not so successful as his interpretations of seven types of ambiguity. Since he was very much under the influence of Marx at the time of this analysis, that reflects also in his interpretation. The analysis of Alice in Wonderland is full of historical and cultural references, and here Empson wants to avoid the previous criticism that he ignores the historical dimension of words in his analyses. They are a rather helpful material, but, generally, they do not contribute too much to making his arguments more convincing, because their choice is in most cases quite arbitrary.

III. EMPSON'S TYPOLOGY OF AMBIGUITY

Theoretically and analytically, Empson's first book was more advanced and complex than any other book of New Criticism published later on. There is no single issue of later importance that had not already been mentioned or discussed in Seven Types of Ambiguity. This was indeed the first publication of the movement, but many times it functioned as its definitive credo. Apart from the fact that he is a better theoretician than any other New Critic, Empson is still primarily a practitioner rather than a scholar. His analysis is sometimes too irritating for orthodox academics, but his interpretations are still among the best achievements of the movement. His theory loses a lot if separated from his analysis, more than his analysis would lose without his theory. This is because the core of Empson's approach to literature is, so to say, from inside out, from the work to the reader, and theory represents for him only a rational attempt to explain literature. However, in using theory as a logical explanation for his analytical methods, Empson was able to reconcile and combine principles from various and very divergent theories and fields.

For instance, Empson was the first literary critic to propagate the idea of ambiguity as the universal feature of a literary work of art. Laura Riding and Robert Graves had indeed started to experiment in the best traditions of Bloomfieldian linguistics with their investigation of the layers of meanings of poetic structure; in addition one could probably mention Roman Ingarden, as well, who in Europe discussed the same topic in his Das literarische Kunstwerk (1931). But neither Riding and Graves, nor Ingarden, spoke about ambiguity as a literary concept. As a matter of fact, Ingarden shares the same opinion as Richards in claiming that multiple meaning can have only a negative effect on poetic structure. Empson accepted the experience of the Bloomfieldian School of linguistics, but he combined it also with Richards' theories of language and communication.

Bloomfield had already formed his views in behavioristic linguistics before he accepted those parts of Richards' behavioristic semantics based on the Affective Theory, or theory of emotivisim. On the contrary, Empson almost completely ignores Richards' semantics, but accepts his theory of communication which also derives from Richards' theory of emotivism. This needs to be explained with additional examples.

First of all, Bloomfield's, Richards' and Empson's semantic theories are quite different from those of Charles S. Pierce, Charles Morris and John Crowe Ransom. Bloomfield's interest in the concepts of language was from the point of view of perception; in comparison to Charles Morris' interest which was from the point of view of experience, values and judgments. In the scope of both conceptions, Richards' emphasis is on semantics and psychology, and Pierce's emphasis is on semantics and language. Bloomfield's inspiration comes also from psychology, but with a personal inclination towards linguistics. Morris' inspiration is from Pierce, and he is inclined more towards the philosophy of language. Since Bloomfield and Richards published earlier in the 1920's, Morris later and in the early 1930's, and Pierce posthoumly in 1934, Empson did not know much either about the Pragmatism of Pierce and Morris, nor about the future development of

Bloomfield's semantics; he was simply attracted by Richards' psychologism and Bloomfield's linguistic methods.

Secondly, Richards' emotive theory of language, also known as the Affective Theory, or theory of emotivism, is based on the combination of two theories of language: the stimulus-response theory and the referential theory. In philosophy, mainly in ethics, philosophy of language and psychology, the theory of "emotivism" occurs near the end of the 19th century and at the very beginning of the 20th century. It was introduced by two Scandinavian philosophers, A. Hägerström and I. Hedenius. The English version of "emotivism" was introduced by the Ogden-Richards joint books, The Meaning of Meaning (1923). Up until the 18th century, the theory of literature failed to discuss the role of the emotions in the literary work of art from the point of view of the author. The Romanticists were the first to abandon the Aristotelian view that a good poem arouses strong emotions, offering instead as a better solution discussing the reverse case: a good poem is a result of strong emotion on the part of the poet. T.S. Eliot offered a distinction between emotions and feelings when speaking about the sensibility of the great poets, but Richards went a step further: replacing the conventional notions of "emotions" and "feelings" with his own concept of "attitudes"; and offering a new distinction between the "emotive language" (the relation "stimulus-response" being caused by imagery and sign-situation) and "symbolic language" (based on the referential function of utterance). The introduction of the theory of "emotivism" meant the revival of discussions on the cognitive function of language, and very soon Richards' theory became the focus of many different schools and disciplines. However, it should be pointed out that emotivists in general emphasize the distinction between statements expressing feelings, and utterances stating that a certain feeling has been experienced. Empson accepted the first, but he was ready to question the validity of the second. His departure from Richards was directed towards Freud and studying poetic images by using the principles of Freudian psychoanalysis.

According to the last chapter in Seven Types of Ambiguity, the poet's attitude toward emotions should play an important role in invoking the feelings in the reader's mind. When speaking earlier about Freud, we mentioned Empson's approach towards the use of psychology in order to explain the creative process as a conflict between thoughts and feelings, the meaning of words and their verbal implications. The author's mind is of equal importance to the reader's mind, but in the interpretation of the work of literature, the reader has the last word. Empson asks the reader to take an active role, not only in regard to the poem, but also in regard to the poet's mind. According to Empson, interpretation is not just another recreation of the creative process, as Richards suggests, it is in fact the meeting of two minds, the reader's and the poet's. Empson uses the term "imaginative experience" to describe the psychological condition for better understanding poetry. The reader is asked to imagine the state of the poet's mind in order to understand the things that he had personally never experienced before. But, theoretically, this psychological condition plays a much more significant role, because it represents the crucial element of other minor conditions of the occurrence of all kinds of ambiguity.

With regard to Freud, we have already shown how this appeared as the basis for the seventh type of ambiguity. However, Empson is less interested in finding out the conditions for the differences between the various types, or in drawing a strict line between prose and poetic meaning, since he is eager to prove that 'poetic' ambiguity is more than a simple inadequacy of language.

Empson's semantics were still more than a simple reflection of Freudian concepts, in spite of the fact that he always uses a disorderly conduct of either the poet's or the reader's mind to explain ambiguity. The major problem in understanding Empson's logic lies in his distinction between language structure and poetic structure. According to his context theory, any meaning depends on context, listener and purpose. If we compare this with his introductory definition of ambiguity, when Empson warns his readers that he will use the term "in an extended sense which gives room for alternative reactions on the same piece of language", (STA, p. 9), we can easily conclude that, besides the psychological pre-condition for ambiguity, nothing else is left for making proper distinctions.

Actually, Empson repeatedly warned the reader that he would use the term "ambiguity" to mean anything that he liked, and that any study of distinctions between the Seven Types "would not be worth the attention of a profound thinker". The problem is not how many types of ambiguity there are, but how they can be used in the practical analysis of literary works. In spite of all kinds of criticism, Empson continued to speak about the implications of sense as a decisive element in determining the poetic meaning, or the poem's meaning. Although his opponents claim that his acceptance of the principle that there is a conflict between the denotary and the connotatory sense of words, (STA, 271) his methods of analysis go far beyond that. Accordingly, they either result in an ascetism tending to kill language by stripping the words of all associations, or, by dissipating the words' sense under a multiplicity of association, they result in a hedonism which tends also "to kill language". Responding to this, Empson stated that his goal is to investigate the 'forces' which hold all elements together in ambiguity (STA, p. 271). In Empson's opinion, all the subsidiary meanings are relevant, but the totality of the poem is not in the verbal detail: it is in the 'forces' known to be at work in the poet's mind (STA, pp. 271, 272, and footnote on page 272).

Some critics reacted negatively to this type of explanation, particularly because it is based on psychological conditions for ambiguity. Lee Lemon, for instance, makes the following remarks:

> William Empson's standard of ambiguity . . . is difficult to deal with because I cannot decide how inclusive the term is supposed to be. Once again there is the description of the term, the modest disclaimer that perhaps it is not of universal importance, and then the treatment of it as the prime characteristic of poetry. Empson's basic assumption, which is both valid and of major importance, is that the effects of a poem cannot be explained in terms of its large-scale meaning, that there are in the words of the poem, besides the obvious meanings, hints that the critic must take in order to discuss the poem's full effect. (Partial Critics, p. 130)

Obviously, what Lemon calls "the poem's full effect" is the same concept as Empson's "totality of the poem". Since Empson sees ambiguity as the prime factor which forms the unity of the poem, keeping all other elements dependent and subsidiary, and since there is a psychological pre-condition for ambiguity as a conflict of meanings in the poet's mind, the leading method in analyzing poetry therefore, is to find how many possible meanings there are in the poem. Empson does not say this directly, but his admission that his task is to investigate all possible meanings and implications of the meanings in order to find out the poetic meaning or the poem's effect upon the reader, is definitely a sufficiently adequate answer. His psychologism is the result of his effort to deal with the reader's responses to the poetic qualities of the poem, rather than to deal directly with the poet's psychology separately from his final product. Empson understands the reading process as the relationship between the reader and the poet, which recreates in the mind of the reader the totality of the creative process. Although he is not interested so much in finding out more data from the poet, his investigation deals with the properties of the poem only to a certain point. His textual analysis is always focused on the effect of the words rather than on their functioning in the poetic structure. This can be one of the major objections to Empson's analytical methods. Any method that singles out always the same qualities in specially selected elements, and that does not justify the reasons for the presence of the other elements which do not have the same favorite status, is a method which should be taken as an additional tool in a seriously done literary analysis. The partiality of the perspective is the main problem of Empson's approach to literature. His treatment of some miniscule topic as the most significant one is very often criticized in spite of the ingenuity of his analysis. The Chicago Critics pointed out that the major error in Empson's typology of ambiguity is that his analysis starts and ends at the wrong ends. In other words, if Empson reversed his method of investigation and started with the analysis of meanings and symbols in order to find out something about the functioning of the poetic images in the poetic structure, maybe the results would accomplish more.

1) The First Type of Ambiguity

Empson defines this type of ambiguity as *the fundamental situation in which a word or grammatical structure is effective in several ways at once*.

This type of ambiguity occurs when the poet cannot decide which elements in the flow of associations he wants to emphasize or keep clearly in his mind. Empson quotes the line from Shakespeare's Sonnet LXXIII: "Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang", and he explains that the line is ambiguous because one cannot see clearly what is more important for the analysis: the "ruined choirs" or "the sweet birds" (*STA*, p. 21).

However, this definition of ambiguity is not yet complete. Each word has its own meaning, but in the sentence different interrelations create different possibilities of meaning. Accordingly there are three distinct meanings in regard to the possible relations of the words in the sentence:

(1) several meanings can be connected one with another;

(2) several meanings can need one another to complete their meanings;

(3) and several meanings can be united together so that each word means a relation or a process.

After this conclusion, Empson was ready to correct his definition of the first type of ambiguity:

> "Ambiguity" itself can mean an indecision as to what you mean, an intention to mean several things, a probability that one or other or both of two things has been meant, and the fact that statement has several meanings. (STA, p. 21)

Furthermore, he concludes that there are several manifestations of the first type of ambiguity:

(1) Pure sound, with three subdivisions:

  (a) echoing the sense

  (b) synesthesia

  (c) atmosphere (with its special branch: the Pathetic Fallacy);

(2) Comparison (based on likeness of elements);

(3) Antithesis (based on differences of elements);

(4) "Comparative" adjectives;

(5) Subdued metaphors;

(6) Rhythm;

(7) Dramatic Irony.

As one can see, although he has already discussed the various aspects of meaning, Empson is always ready to offer more and more examples for different variations of "ambiguities" of the first type. However, the complexity of this kind of ambiguity does not appear too complicated if one examines Empson's list carefully. Except Pure Sound, Rhythm and Dramatic Irony, all other four manifestations create one single group. For example, in the comparisons with several points of likeness as in the antithesis with several points of difference the meaning is not clear and certain because there is the serious dilemma of how to choose among so many elements the particular one that buries the real meaning.

It does not really matter if the elements put together are there because of "likeness" or "difference"; their function would be the same. Furthermore, all adjectives are comparative by their very nature; therefore, when Empson tries to explain that the term "comparative" should apply to the ambiguity created by several adjectives which make obscure the meaning of the accompanied noun, that is the same case of ambiguity as in "comparison by likeness" or in "antithesis by difference".

A similar explanation is offered for "subdued or sleeping metaphors". As those previously mentioned, this source of ambiguity is too general to be classified as an out of the ordinary example. All languages are composed of dead metaphors and all metaphors imply comparison. If the original meaning is forgotten, that is not enough to create ambiguity. As in the cases of comparisons, antithesis, comparative adjectives, the same applies to subdued metaphors: in all of them ambiguity occurs as the result of the vagueness of the expressions. This is best shown in the analytical examples, when Empson interprets all these variations of ambiguity of the first type using the Pre-Raphaelites' metaphors and euphemistic conceits and the paradoxes of nineteenth century poetry.

However, Empson's discussion of the functions of Pure Sound, Rhythm and Dramatic Irony in forming the meaning is rather more substantial and theoretically convincing. Following the tradition of Romanticism, and using Richard Paget's theory of sounds as gestures for his theoretical background, Empson shows his awareness that the natural implications of language make the question of using Pure Sound for changing the meaning a particularly important one.

First of all, the sound must be an echo of the sense, says Empson. Sounds are valuable because they suggest incidental connections of various aspects of meaning, but the very same (or similar) devices of sound may quite effectively correspond to the various meanings. Therefore, connections of words of similar sounds to similar meanings are the most common and proper way to produce a certain meaning.

Synesthesia represents the reverse of the method of connecting words with similar sound to similar meaning. Instead of being an onomatopeic case that repeats the meaning in its sound likeness, synesthesia connects words with various meanings to the suggestion of Pure Sound. For example, certain vowels are supposed to suggest certain colors, or various consonants should have the effect of something hard and tough if they occur in words of the same meaning. Besides (1) the sound being an echo of sense, and (2) the function of sound suggesting the connection between different meanings, there is (3) the third manifestation of sound creating a special kind of meaning - Atmosphere. Empson defines Atmosphere as the consciousness of what is implied by the meaning; for instance, it is like recognizing a musical chord as a direct sensation, either felt or thought. In other words, in this case the musical chord has a dual meaning: one in the scope of the whole musical structure, the other as an independent and direct suggestion for itself. The Pathetic Fallacy is one particular form of Atmosphere.

2) The Other Six Types of Ambiguity

There are two reasons why it is not necessary to discuss at full length the next six types of Empson's typology of ambiguity. If it is done properly, the explanation of the First Type should serve as sufficient insight into the conception of all types. By understanding the fundamentals of the First Type, one should be able to understand the others as well. Repeating the same type of analysis with the rest of the book would be a useless task; equalled in its uselessness by an attempt to compare all types one to another. Because the fact is that the following six types are more or less either the logical extension of the First Type, or the full variation of some other type. Therefore, this will be only a brief survey of the remaining six types.

The Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Types basically describe the situation when two or more meanings, in various ways, create a conflict that will be the reason for ambiguity. For example:

(A) The Second Type of Ambiguity occurs when two or more meanings are resolved into one;

(B) The Third Type of Ambiguity occurs when two ideas are given in one word simultaneously;

(C) The Fourth Type of Ambiguity occurs when two or more meanings do not agree, but still create a clear image in the complicated state of mind;

(D) The Fifth Type is a logical extension of the Fourth Type and occurs when the poet, in the middle of the creative act, discovers a new idea so that he is half way between - the first idea is not satisfactory any more, the new idea is not saying enough, thus the author is moving back and forth from one to another.

The Sixth and Seventh Types deal also with the act of creating, representing the logical extension of the Fifth Type. The difference between the Fifth and Sixth Type is that the author is unable to say anything substantial, so that he repeats the information (tautology), or gives wrong and irrelevant information. The ambiguity occurs when the reader invents the statements to create the meaning because of the author's inability to offer proper information.

The Seventh Type of Ambiguity occurs also as the poet's dilemma, when two meanings are so opposite and definitive that the total effect is a division which cannot be overcome.

As one can see, these six types have one feature in common: all of them depend on the psychological disorder in the poet's mind and occur because of divisions or conflict-situations creating the inability to make a proper choice (or to understand) what the real meaning is.

For example, unlike the First Type which uses a metaphor which is valid in several ways, the Second Type uses several metaphors at once. However, the ambiguity arises because there is a definite disorder between the logical and psychological degree of meaning, which can be manifested through (1) syntax; (2) the role of consciousness; and (3) by psychological complexity concerned in each particular case.

This is explored in a most intriguing and unusual way. Empson's starting point is that in any complexity of meanings there is always one main meaning which functions as a resultant. Logical disorder creates ambiguity and occurs when the balance between the logical and psychological degree of meaning is out of order. Generally speaking, the complexity of logical meaning corresponds to the complexity of thought, and, contrary to this, psychological meaning ought to be based on only one and very direct feeling. In other words, grammatical disorder implies that the thought should be complicated or doubtful, and the feeling is supposed to be very direct and clear in order to create the second type of ambiguity. The role of consciousness is to create purposely all kinds of ambiguity by puns, using homonyms, or emphasizing certain types of words (in Shakespeare, Latinized words, for example).

The Third Type is very similar to the Second Type and takes similar topics for the analysis: puns, allegories, ornamental comparisons. Empson chooses again a psychological explanation to show how puns, allegories and ornamental comparisons operate. A pun is justified so long as its two or more parts do not have such strong associative powers to suggest different modes of judgments. If the poet wants to say something that can be explained in a few possible ways, he must say it only once, without any repetition. Because if there are several similar ways of judging the situation, their clash in a single word would produce the tension in the whole only if the reader already knows what is relevant for the meaning of the pun. Therefore, the tension would not be created by the reader's attempts to understand the pun, through derivation and commands of language, as it is supposed to be in the case of the third type of ambiguity.

When Empson speaks about allegory, it is difficult to determine whether the first or the third type of ambiguity would occur. The Pun itself is not necessarily an ambiguity, but allegories usually are. However, Empson thinks that we should distinguish two different functions of allegory. (1) Allegory can be used as a creative form, or (2) as a statement. Both allegories offer many levels of interpretations and comparisons, but the first kind of allegory does not specify and make clear the real meaning (for example, in Dante, it is not clear if the main point of allegory is religious, political or even philosophical). This type of allegory is always ambiguous because the poet leaves the reader to infer his own opinion. The second type of allegory is more common and serves exclusively as a simile, to be effective by its point of view. It is intended also to offer a few interpretations (to tell a homely story and make clear that it can mean something else), but the poet has to point out very clearly that there is only one real meaning. In this case there is no ambiguity because the reader is "told" what the meaning is.

Speaking about an ornamental comparison Empson says that this comparison occurs when the poet works on the mutual complement of both the subject and the object of comparison. This comparison is not merely using one thing to illustrate another, but is interested in two things at once, and is making them illustrate one another mutually. (STA, p. 137)

If these two meanings, the meaning of the subject of comparison and the meaning of the object of comparison, are complementary, one can ask how there can be reason for ambiguity. Empson uses a psychological explanation:

> The mind has compartment-holding opinions and modes of judgment which conflict when they come together; that, in fact, is why they are separated; compartments, therefore, which require attention, and one is particularly conscious of anything that mixes them up. (STA, pp .139-140)

If both parts of an ornamental comparison involve two such compartments; with two different ways of thinking, we have the conditions for a general ambiguity of the third type. The clash or conflict between different modes of feeling is a normal source of pleasure in pastoral, where the ornamental comparisons occur the most.

Empson's discussion of ambiguities is quite often based on the use of Freudian concepts such as "conflict", "disorder", "consciousness", "pleasure", "satisfaction". Even when he speaks about value judgments, he refers to them as dependant on the author's or the reader's mind. According to Empson, there are two functions of value judgments, one corresponding to the author who selects the standard for more and better poetic effectiveness, and the other concerning the reader who selects a reason for and measurement of the validity of the pleasure caused by poetic effectiveness. In other words, Empson speaks about the author's conscious efforts to use special devices, allegories, comparisons and puns in producing ambiguities. The reader's role is to discover values and pleasure in these ambiguities. Therefore, the state of the author's mind always plays an important role in creating ambiguity. Speaking about the Fourth Type, Empson shows how this condition works.

For instance, analyzing one of Wordsworth's poems, Empson sets another example for ambiguity caused by complicated and confused states of the author's mind. According to Empson, Wordsworth was neither a philosophical nor an ambiguous poet; but his *cult of simplicity sometimes moved to complexity of the poem back into the subconscious, poisoned only the sources of thought* and *stated as simply as possible the fundamental disorders of the mind*. The reason for the ambiguity of Wordsworth's lines in *Tintern Abbey* is in the discrepancy between Wordsworth's attempts to express his idea of pantheism and the taste of the reader *who can impose grammar without difficulty to uphold his own views*. (*STA*, p. 180)

a) The Analysis of Thomas Nashe's "Adieu, farewell earth's bliss"

One of the best examples of Empson's analysis is that of an Elizabethan poem, known sometimes as "In Plague Time," but originally from the allegorical play *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, by Thomas Nashe, (called also by the first line "Adieu, farewell earth's blisse..."). Empson uses contemporary spelling and punctuation, and the analysis is supposed to be an example for the ambiguity of the first type (composed of dead metaphors). We will quote first the original, with archaic spelling, and then Empson's version, because it is important to know how he comes to his conclusion.

I. The Original Spelling	II. Empson's Version
Beauty is but a flowere,	Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinckles will deuoure,	Which wrinkles will devour
Brightness falls from the ayre,	Brightness falls from the air.
Queenes have died yong faire,	Queens have died young and fair.
Dust hath closde *Helens eye*.	Dust hath closed Helen's eye.
I am sick, I must dye:	I am sick, I must die.
Lord have mercy on vs.	Lord, have mercy on us.

The poem itself, "In Plague Time," is very long and is dedicated, as the whole play, to Henry VIII. The word "summer" which occurs in the title of the play, and in the text as well, is an ambiguous pun and allusion to Will Summers, who was Henry VIII's court jester. The best known part is the first stanza of the poem, also known as the song "Adieu, farewell earth's blisse," but often referred to as the title of the whole poem as well. The most important part is the third stanza, quoted here. Empson refers to other parts of the song, but basically his analysis is concerned with the third stanza.

Because this is the analysis of the first type of ambiguity, let us see what Empson is looking for in this particular case. According to his definition, we have here a case of subdued or dead metaphor. Empson states that "all languages are *composed of dead metaphors as the soil of corpses*" but English is uniquely full of the sort of metaphors, "which are not dead but sleeping, and, while making a direct statement, colour it with an implied comparison" (*STA*, p. 45). In other words, analyzing Nashe's poem, Empson is looking for the ambiguity caused by this type of metaphor, effective from several points of view, but receiving an acquired sense of the words being used in a different way in the past.

Empson starts with a subdued metaphor in the word *devour*, suggesting that the real meaning should be either 'remove' or 'replace' *with no more than an overtone of cruelty and the unnatural*. Such as:

remove (cruelty)
Beauty is but a flower which wrinkles will with
replace (the unnatural)

Written in this way, Empson's analysis immediately resembles the Bloomfieldian linguistic model of distribution and bracketing the meaning. The second word in Empson's focus is wrinkles which he explains as time's tooth-marks referring to Ovid's Time as the edax rerum, and because of the word flower, wrinkles on the face are compared now to rodent, ulcers, caterpillars on petals, and the worms that are to gnaw it in the grave. Therefore, the key word here is the caterpillar (from flower), but the Elizabethean imagination would let slip no chance of airing its miraculous corpse worm. (Ibid.)

Empson's interpretation is as inclusive as possible. Instead of the ordinary connotations such as to destroy, or to eat up for the word "devour," he suggests to 'remove' or to 'replace,' by far milder expressions but needed in combination with his idea of the "caterpillar" as the Elizabethan "corpse-worm." No doubt Empson's references to the Elizabethan idea of what happens to the body after death are accurate. To many Elizabethan writers (Shakespeare, in Hamlet, for instance) human flesh is simply worms' meat. However, the problem is how Empson came up with the idea of the caterpillar, when the word does not appear in the text. The parallel "beauty-flowerwrinkles" is very obvious even without the verb "devour", and the key is the second parallel between "flower" and "devour" on the one hand, and "wrinkles" on the other. Why did Empson stress so much the function of the word "devour"? The answer is in his paraphrase of Ovid, taken from Metamorphoses ("Tempus edax rerum . . ." which means "Time the greedy devourer of things"; and Empson says "It may make Time the edax rerum, and wrinkles only time's tooth marks"). Empson is not claiming that

Nashe was thinking about grave-worms when he wrote the poem, because he would write "Beauty is like a flower / Which caterpillars will devour", and that would be a totally different poem. But Empson suggests that according to Nashe's choice of words we can assume that there was another meaning present in his subconscious that he was not aware of, and this meaning appears in the poem as a subdued or dead metaphor.

The rest of Empson's analysis is devoted to the lines "Brightness falls from the air" and "Dust hath closed Helen's eye". The first line is an example of ambiguity by vagueness, the second line is an example of ambiguity by juxtaposition. Empson uses the same method again, making first the connotatory connections between "brightness" and "air", on the one hand; and "dust" and "Helen's eyes", on the other hand. The words "to fall" and "to close" do not have metaphorical meaning here; their meaning is direct.

According to Empson, the word "brightness" should not be understood as something bright, i.e., in its direct, one-dimensional sense. The real meaning of "brightness" here is multiple: something dead and exhausted falls down, something flashing falls down, something threatening falls down, something abstract and unsafe falls down, and so on. Therefore, the connotation of "brightness" can be various, from stars and meteorites, to Icarus and the prey of hawks, from hawks themselves to lightning and the threat of thunder. But Empson's analysis does not stop here, he connects the meaning of "brightness" with the meaning of "air" as two conflicting concepts like light and darkness, i.e., good and evil. Referring to the ecclesiastical interpretations, Empson cites the following lines: "All is unsafe, even the heavens are not sure of their brightness", and "the qualities in man that deserve respect are not natural to him but brief gifts from God; they fall like manna, and melt as soon". In other words, in time of pestilence, with a taint of darkness in the air, the generosity of Nature is mysteriously interrupted by brightness like a sudden thunder. (STA, p. 46)

It is interesting that Empson completely ignores the line "Queens have died young and fair" and rejects the suggestion of some critics that "air" here might mean "hair" because of the old English spelling "ayre" and "haer" and the pronunciation which did not distinguish between "air" and "hair". If the line should read "Brightness fall from the 'hair'", and it is followed with "Queens have died young and fair", that would suggest that "brightness" means "life", and the real parallel is "hair" and "fair". Of course, this would completely destroy Empson's analysis, and he claims that that would be "a cynical theory", rather an impossibility to deal with than to prove.

The ambiguity by juxtaposition in the line "Dust hast closed Helen's eye" is explained in terms of the parallel between the previous concentration of "brightness" and a new key word, "dust". As mentioned above, the connection is established by ignoring the line in between ("Queens have died . . ."). According to Empson's interpretation, there are two elements that create ambiguity here. First of all, we have to think about Helen as a statue or an "undecaying corpse", and about dust as something coming from outside, but "generated (also) from her own corruption". The comparison is in the parallel "brightness falling" and "dust falling", like "bright motes dancing in the sunbeams which fall and become dust . . . dirty and infectuous", and, as the second alternative, brightness is the lightness, gaity, and activity of humanity, and dust is the grave, the end, darkness.

This short example of Empson's analysis shows how brilliant his interpretations can be, but at the same time, it reveals where the potential dangers of his methods lie. Many scholars have objected to this type of analysis as illegitimate for two reasons. First, Empson is trying to find help for his analysis outside the text. Looking at all possible meanings and implications of meanings, even if they are not present or impossible to verify, he ignores the contextual meaning and the natural limitations of the text. Secondly, Empson's arguments are very difficult or almost impossible to justify as accurate or truthful because of the fact that Empson uses arguments which either cannot be justified (such as all possible meanings and implications according to the New Oxford Dictionary) or are pure speculations and do not belong to the text, as in the case of "caterpillar" in the analysis of Nashe's poem.

The proponents of Empson's approach, Burke and Blackmur, attempted to defend Empson's position responding to the first objection with a comment that a critic is allowed to get any help that he can get, regardless whether the information is a part of the text or not. According to them, the critic is free to choose and use any fact, knowledge or information if these will bring any new light into his interpretation. Sometimes the critic's intuition is a more helpful and valid tool than all the gathered material which belongs to the poem itself. The second argument against Empson, which requires that one should be able to prove or justify that the analysis was correct, is false and easily rejected. If it is true that the final conclusions of Empson's analysis cannot be proven, one must admit that they also cannot be disproved. The crux of the matter is not, as E.D. Hirsch believes, whether some interpretation can be justified by elements of the poetic structure in itself, but whether we are ready and convinced to accept the logic and argumentation of someone's interpretation.

Empson's type of analysis poses a serious theoretical question: What is a literary interpretation? This question cannot be answered without posing a series of other questions such as: If we agree that there is no right or wrong interpretation, why should someone impose the idea that an interpretation is supposed to be justified only by the poetic text? Isn't it enough if the critic is able to give the reader a few hints about possible interpretations and leave everything else for the reader to decide for himself? Whether or not one agrees with Empson's solutions, the matter of fact is that he always inspires the reader to find at least one more possible interpretation. Academics could never accept the fact that the critic should be allowed to have the same type of freedom as the author of any literary text, which is the message that we receive from Empson. By allowing himself to distort the text, to misquote, to change punctuation, and so on, Empson opens up a completely new field of criticism: a creative and imaginative type of criticism which is not impressionistic, but based on three types of reality: the reality of the poem, the reality of the author and the reality of the reader. Each has equal rights and functions;

which means that the reader is no longer a passive element of this triad, but a creative and equally productive factor which makes the interpretation possible.

IV. CONCLUSION: CRITICS' ESTIMATE OF WILLIAM EMPSON'S CRITICISM

There are quite a number of critics who were challenged, intrigued or irritated enough to write about William Empson. The list of names is quite impressive: the New Critics themselves; Bateson, Daiches, H. Gardner, Glicksberg, Hyman, Olson, Richards, R. Sale, Schaar and Rosemond Tuve. There are plenty of polemics as well, the most famous two, that one with Geoffrey Grigson in Poetry (1937), and the other with John Sparrow earlier, in Oxford Outlook (1930 and 1931), and the enormous number of books and articles about Empson's interpretation of Milton is still growing. The fact of the matter is, however, that there are no recent publications on Empson's criticism, in spite of the renewed interest in his poetry and a continuing interest in his writings on Milton. Even leaving aside studies of Empson, studies of New Criticism in general and those which only partially include Empson in the scope of their topics are not very recent and complete.

As a matter of fact, there are many critics like M. Krieger and L. Lemon in the past, or R. Wellek and G. Graff most recently, who wrote about Empson's theoretical or analytical concepts, covering only one or two problems, because their major topic was dealing either with New Criticism, or the theory of literature in general. There are, of course, the earlier studies of Olson, Hyman and Roger Sale, as well as one of the rare finally published doctoral dissertations, written by

Horst Meller, Das Gedicht als Einubung: Zum Dichtungsverstandnis Wiliam Empsons (Heidelberg, 1974, but the thesis was defended in 1968). But, there were no other critical overviews of Empson's criticism specially concerned with providing a complete, accurate and overall picture of both Empson's theoretical and analytical achievements. Unfortunately, particularly as a theoretician, Empson was very underestimated by critics. His detractors were particularly hostile at the very beginning of his career and in the early 1950's. Empson's performance as analyst was much better accepted, but aside from Hyman's favorable essay in The Armed Vision (1948) and some writings of the New Critics, practically nobody else supported Empson's analytical methods until the late 1960's, when the situation suddenly changed and he became a very significant figure in the movement again.

Empson's reputation as a critic is based mostly on his earlier works, or on the controversial issues that he discusses with a certain confidence that was not always appreciated by the critics who were used to a more traditional approach to literature. For instance, one of the first articles published by Empson was his analysis of "Sacrifice" by Herbert, in Experiment (May, 1929), which he included later in Seven Types of Ambiguity, but did not revise essentially even after the objection of Rosemond Tuve in 1950. She published this first in an article in Keynon Review,[23] then the remarks were included in the book A Reading of George Herbert (1952). The question was more theoretical than analytical, and Empson responded twice,[24] stating that he did ignore historical connotations in his analysis of Herbert's poem, but that he still thought that "Herbert felt the paradox of the vengeful God of Love to be an extremely severe strain . . . [and] he had to heighten the paradoxes till a reader is forced to wonder whether they will manage to balance" (*STA*, pp. 17-18). In other words, Empson offers an alternative for traditional religious interpretation of the line 'Man stole the fruit, but I must climb the Tree / The Tree of Love, for all but only me'.

The first line might mean Christ is doing the stealing, on behalf of Man, becoming Prometheus and criminal: or, he is not sinful, and climbing means that he will take his people to Heaven, climbing upwards like the Jack of "Jack and the Beanstalk." But, that is not all, and Empson suggests another explanation as well. He claims that Herbert's poem is a unique example of unorthodox interpretation of Christ as a tragic hero and scapegoat, combining in his act an act of supreme virtue and the act of sin. It is possible that the tree symbolizes the Cross made from the wood of the forbidden trees, but Christ is here smaller than Man, or at any rate from Eve, who could pluck the fruit without climbing. He is a child who steals without actually stealing, he is the Son of God. On the other hand, the act of stealing is the act of sin; the son stealing from the father's orchard is a symbol of incest, says Empson (*STA*, p. 269). As in his reply to the detractors who objected to his interpretation of Shakespeare, Empson responded to Miss Tuve's arguments that he was convinced that the critic should use everything that goes through his mind during the reading, because there is more that "goes on in our mind" than can be suggested by a historical setting (*STA*, p. 17).

Rosemond Tuve rejects Empson's analysis by insisting that climbing the tree simply means "I must ascend the cross", where the phrase "must" does not refer to Christ being a little boy, but means a command of God. According to Tuve, there is nothing unique in this poem; as a matter of fact Herbert is here quite unoriginal because he follows strictly the traditional medieval concepts: first, that Christ is a second Adam; and second, that the complaint of Christ is so typical for that time because it represents a part of liturgical phrasing, and there is no doubt that Herbert simply copied the pattern from one of the many Middle English and Latin devotional poems or treatises of the time. Tuve included enormous material to back up her arguments, but Empson simply answered that no amount of study of the historical setting can replace the poetic value found in a simple reading. Obviously, there is a serious theoretical dilemma here. We have on the one hand, a fascinating, but historically incorrect analysis; and, on the other hand, an academic, scholarly study well-done and accurate, but dull and unappealing in interpretation. Which one should be chosen? This dilemma will become a part of the most common complaints against Empson's analytical methods.

Using a purely theoretical argument, E.D. Hirsch takes Empson as a typical example for what happens in the interpretation which does not distinguish between possible implications that belong to the meaning of the text and those that do not belong.[25] Hirsch criticizes Empson's position with the motivation that Empson treats literature as a "piece of language", that is, as a public object whose character is defined by public norms.[26] According to Hirsch, Empson is wrong in principle, because the object of interpretation is not the author, but the text. Secondly, the textual meaning has nothing to do with the author's mind but only with his verbal achievements. In other words, Empson is so preoccupied with conflicts between the reader's mind and the author's mind that he no longer distinguishes between the significance and meaning of the words. In Hirsch's terminology, significance implies the relationship between the textual meaning and a person, a conception, a situation, a period, etc. Meaning is strictly represented by text, and it implies exactly what the author meant by using a particular sign sequence.[27]

The best scrutiny of Empson's approach to literature is still the one done by Elder Olson.[28] In spite of the fact that Olson's basic premise is very similar to the principal objections of Tuve and Hirsch, his criticism is more elaborate and less arbitrary. Besides the same assertion that Empson confuses the implication and meanings of the words, Olson's major point is that Empson does not distinguish properly between the poetic meaning and prose meaning of the words. For instance, according to Olson, there is no big difference if the same word is used in prose or in poetry. The New Critics generally accepted the Richardsian distinction between prose language and poetic language based on the Affective theory, whereas the Chicago Critics strongly opposed these views and, in particular, Richards' theory of emotivism. Therefore, Olson attempts here to defend the line of the Chicago Critics against Empson's psychologism and his typology of ambiguity. Olson's major arguments are in the following quotation:

> Language functions very differently in the epigram, the didactic verse-treatise, and mimetic tragedy; if you call all of these 'poetry' and inquire into the nature of poetic language, you will end up with some description which, because it must be common to all these, will be very general and shed little light upon the specific functioning of language in, say, mimetic tragedy. Moreover, it was in the nature of the case that certain of these characteristics, being very general, should turn out to be common to things which were obviously not poetry, in any of the accepted senses, at all. For example, language is common to all the things called 'poetry'; but nothing is more evident than that scientific prose, for instance, is very different from poetry, although it too is language . . . (Olson, p. 37)

After ten pages debating the differences between various genres and poetic forms, Olson came to the conclusion:

> There are no necessary differences between poetic diction, as diction, and the diction of any other kind of composition. There are no devices of language which can be pointed out to as distinctively poetic; any other kind of composition may utilize metaphor, images, rhythm, meter, rhyme, or any of the 'devices of poetic language', and poetry may utilize any of the devices associated with any other literary kind. (Olson, p. 47)

Since he admits that there can be some difference between prose and poetry, but not based on the idea of "poetic language" and "poetic devices", Olson finds his solution in the functioning of language as material, not as form. In other words, the difference should be based on the difference between the poetic and unpoetic functions of language, and the discussion "ought to proceed, not from devices to functions, but from functions to devices" (Olson, p. 48). Unfortunately, it seems that Olson misses the point here, because Empson also speaks about different functions of language, and meaning depending on context, poetic images and mental state of the reader or the author. The fact of the matter is that Empson does not make a clear definition of ambiguity occurring in prose, in opposition to ambiguity occurring in poetry; and secondly, he accepts the idea of emotivism; otherwise he claims the same as Olson.

After he pointed out the contradictions and discrepancies that exist either in Empson's theory, or in its application in his analysis, Olson summarizes his major complaints in the following few points. First of all, the Richardsian principle that poetry is simply an aspect or condition of language differentiated from other languages by a certain attribute (in Empson's case by ambiguity) is not satisfactory to Olson for several reasons. The very first is that Empson is neither sure what he means by ambiguity; his principles of classification are based on the supposition that poetry is necessarily ambiguous, but his examples do not always satisfy his conditions for ambiguity; nor are his analytical methods indeed concerned with the problem of ambiguity or poetic meaning in general. (Olson, pp. 25, 29, 30, 31)

Secondly, Empson's analytical methods are too mechanical, using simply the techniques of permutations and combinations of different meanings, with two assumptions in mind: (1) that all kinds of ambiguities are a result of a certain mental disorder or conflict either in the author's mind, or in the reader's mind, or in both; and (2) that all possible meanings are needed to explain the poetic meaning or ambiguity of the poem. (Olson, pp. 27 and 32)

Speaking about meaning, Olson is especially critical of Empson's so-called context theory and his confusion between meaning and inference or implication. He quotes examples to prove that there are poems which are ambiguous without reflecting any mental confusion, disorder or conflict of the author's mind, such as allegory, didactic and mimetic poetry, etc. The problem is that it would be very difficult to decide if this argument is valid enough because Empson also speaks about these same types of poetry, insisting that ambiguity occurs only under certain conditions; and if Olson says that ambiguity can occur even without these conditions, that does not mean that Empson is completely wrong. (Olson, pp. 44-47)

The most critical part of Olson's essay deals with the discrimination of four conditions of meaning and inference. Olson claims that the major problem with Empson's confusions is caused by Empson's inability to define properly the concepts of both meaning and inference or implication. According to Olson, the first condition is based wholly upon linguistic or other semantic matter (meanings of the words, syntactical laws, etc.). Meaning here is simply a result of "the significant powers of words and their combination" and inference, if present at all, is minimal. Empson calls this the meaning of 'direct' statements or expressions. Inference occurs when the parts are misunderstood linguistically or interpreted out of the context of the whole, but basically, the sentences are simple and the meaning is the resultant only of verbal signs. (Olson, p. 32)

Secondly, the meaning may be a result of more than verbal signs, such as inferences based on the character or purpose of the speaker, the manner of delivery, our presupposed knowledge or opinion, the situation, etc. Usually, these types of inferences are not directly related to the meaning; they even contradict it in many cases, but they still emphasize the changes and modify the utterance. Irony is the best example, according to Olson, for this type of meaning, because we can infer from something over and above the verbal expression to mean the opposite of what it says. (Ibid.)

The third type of meaning, in Olson's opinion, is produced by inference, but in itself also produces an inference which is not a part of the meaning. For instance, an axiom of geometry does not mean every theorem which can be drawn from it, regardless of the fact that this possibility still exists in the sentence. Empson is mistaken when he believes that his sentence "The brown cat sat on the red mat" means at the same time "Language is possible" or "This is a statement about a cat". The sentence in itself is a fact, but inferences drawn from that fact are not a part of its meaning. (Olson, p. 32)

And finally, the fourth situation: when there is inference possible quite apart from meaning. For instance, if you see a bloody axe, and you infer that something was killed with it, there is no meaning involved because there is no fact involved. The fact of the bloody axe implies the fact of killing, but there is no evidence, there is an absence of language and meaning involvement, and all arbitrary signs are missing. (Olson, pp. 32-33)

Olson complains that Empson does not make an effective distinction between these four cases. All are equally "meaning" to him, and he uses them in dealing with a single part of poetry, with poetic diction. His treatment of the cat sentence shows that he assumes that the sentence does not have merely (1) its obvious meaning; (2) that it can mean that it is a part of a fairy tale or that it comes from a primer; and (3) that it is a statement about the cat. Olson does not understand how Empson's obsession with dictionary meaning can be applied in the fourth case, because he considers that dictionary meanings are already too determinative; but in Empson's case, presumably, there is a certain looseness in the critical proceeding. (Olson, pp. 32, 33 et passim)

Obviously, there is a certain point in Olson's criticism of Empson's treatment of the implications of words as equal to the meanings of words. But he misses the major point when he does not understand Empson's commitment to dictionaries. Empson needs dictionaries because they help him to see the body every time he sees a bloody axe. As in the fourth case of Olson's list of meanings and inferences, Empson produces inferences which are apart from the meaning present in the poetic structure, and by the produced inferences he introduces a new poetic meaning into the text. To verify the legitimacy of his methods, Empson uses dictionaries. Some of Olson's other remarks stay unjustified. Empson does speak about other aspects of poetry besides poetic diction, but because his major attention is concentrated mostly on the seach for hidden meanings, one gets the impression that his approach is too simplistic. He speaks about sound, atmosphere, allegory, rhythm, meter, irony, puns, imagery, symbols, metaphors, etc.; but he is looking indeed for ambiguities being produced by these devices.

But there were scholars like Stanley Edgar Hyman who praised Empson. In his book The Armed Vision (1948), Hyman speaks highly of Empson's "categorical criticism". He considers Empson to be one of the leading modern critics. Praising all his books, but being particularly fond of Some Versions of Pastoral, Hyman states that in this book

Empson went further than ever before because he combined his own understanding of ambiguity with the teachings of Marx, Freud, Darwin and Frazer. He is more than fascinated by Seven Types of Ambiguity, but he still considers that some new essays on linguistics will be more appealing to the serious scholars as are the works from the author's more mature period.[29] He admits that he did not like the second edition of Seven Types (1947) because, after all the corrections and Empson's endless apologies, he found that the book had lost its charm and revolutionary anger. He easily dismisses all charges against Empson's psychologism and the use of intuition to work out some analytical problems, saying that Empson's intuition is a result of hard work, not a flash of some irrational power or inspiration. Since Empson was already praised for his analysis of Milton, and criticized for the analysis of Shakespeare, Hyman tries to defend Empson's use of earlier editions of Shakespeare instead of critical and proof-read editions. He claims that Empson is right because, besides all errors and unfortunate comments or corrections, the earlier edition kept the old type of punctuation which kept all the ambiguities and the possible real meaning of the text. Modern editions of Shakespeare have modern punctuation which changes the meaning of the text.

In other words, Hyman wants to say that it is almost irrelevant to speak about different editions of Shakespeare because we can only study and guess in order to find out what would be the correct meaning in Shakespeare. His position towards and estimate of William Empson is very radical, in spite of the fact that The Structure of Complex Words (1951) and Milton's God (1961) were not published yet. He criticizes

Empson's extreme efforts to use Basic English in interpreting literature as an additional tool, anticipating similar extremes which would occur in The Structure of Complex Words.

However, there were critics like Roger Sale and Gerald Graff,[30] who wrote on several occasions about William Empson and New Criticism with a sense of critical approval and objectivity. Roger Sale in particular did a very detailed analysis of Empson's analytical methods in comparison with some other critics. He pointed out all kinds of mistakes that Empson had made in his analysis, but he also found excuses for him: Empson was simply a unique figure in Anglo-American Criticism, he is a poet-critic who understands the interpretation of literature in a different way from scholars and members of the academic establishment.

Regardless of whether we accept this as a solution, or if we understand Empson's type of analysis as a challenge, a critical and literary provocation, it will remain without saying that his criticism indeed opens up a field and perspective for a rethinking and reevaluation of our view and the relationship towards literature and criticism. With Empson, suddenly the reader again becomes the most important, decisive figure in reading and interpreting literature. Maybe that is the way it should be, maybe we are forgetting that the texts exist for us and because of us. Yes, the author wrote it, but so does a shoemaker make shoes. Do we think about him wearing shoes?

FINAL CONCLUSION:

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE THREE CRITICS

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE THREE CRITICS:

Is there anything in common in the views of Ransom, Brooks and Empson?

Dealing with the theory and practice of the New Critics means dealing constantly with controversial issues, discrepancies and contradictions. Comparing the writings of such individuals as Ransom, Brooks and Empson seems to be an almost useless task, taking into account the fact that they are so much apart from each other that, besides taste, there is hardly anything in common between them. However, they do belong to the same movement, and they did write about the same topics. They did not share the same opinions about everything, but they share the same way of thinking, and, more importantly, they use more or less the same analytical methods in analyzing poetry. The main problem is to discover what these methods are, and if they are the same, does it mean that they work in the same way for each of them?

In conducting the investigation of this thesis, it was obvious that to answer all these questions we would have to deal with some already established opinions about Ransom, Brooks and Empson as members of the New Criticism as a movement, and, separately, with the opinions of the scholars about their writings as critics. The historical dimension was always present, not only because most of these opinions were based on inherited biased and inaccurate premises, but also because the overall picture of the New Critics has been changed so many times. Studying individually any of these critics means something totally different than studying them against the historical background of the movement, or in the scope of the traditional framework where they belong. Even a simple comparison of their individual differences shows that many of the traditional labels, such as that the New Critics are "formalists", "classicists", anti-Freudian, Kantians, and so on, simply are not true.

On the contrary, our studies show that both theoretically and analytically, the New Critics were closer to their traditional roots than to any European influence, if this is present at all. Behind the New Critical rhetoric lies a very simple and traditional approach to literature. The only novelty was to put the stress on different issues and emphasize the need to change the direction and the focus of the critic's attention. What makes the New Criticism unique is that its members did more by not being aware of what they were doing than when they were trying to pursue their own ambitions and achieve some academic results. Their scholarship and academic tasks could not match their personal ambitions and motivation, this discrepancy was reflected in their theorizing as a major weakness. But their natural talent as creative writers contributed to their sense for detail, which shows clearly in their analysis of literary works. Therefore, whenever they were free from feeling that they were chosen to propagate their beliefs, or that they had to establish some universal principles of literature, they were able to find a proper way to talk about literature. The freshness and charm of their best interpretations of poetry lies in their approach to literature from the point of view of the poets. In interpreting poetry they are not so much interested in discovering anything about that particular poem, as they are indeed interested in finding out the mechanism of the creative process which was used by the author to make that particular poem. They would never admit this explicitly; they reject the idea of discussing the intentions of the author as well, they refuse to discuss the meaning or message of the poem. But they admit that they believe that the critic's approach should be the reverse of the creative process, and each of their interpretations shows clearly that they are after the meaning of the words, symbols, images, and other details.

The structural analysis of the New Critics shows that their search for the meaning of each particular detail is directed towards the discovery of the mechanism and compositional framework of the poem in spite of their personal differences in understanding the poetic structure and defining the concepts of poetic meaning, language, the function of poetry, and so on. Each of the three New Critics discussed here is convinced that literature in itself should be the beginning and the end of any literary criticism. Ransom may propagate a dualistic theory of poetic structure, Brooks can be in favor of Organicism, and Empson might consider the semantic approach to be the only right one. But when it comes to the basis of this philosophy we discover that behind all their rhetoric there is the same belief in the existence of a literary work as a specific phenomenon; and regardless of all their differences in defining literature as knowledge, communication, or statement, they still think that the only and proper way to treat literature is from the point of view of the reader.

They are indeed the propagators of textual analysis. However, their understanding of textual interpretation is restricted to the contextual analysis of poetic meaning. They use indeed different methods, concepts and techniques in their interpretation of poetry, but beneath all these individual procedures there is the same methodological approach, the same desire and the same motivation. Ransom can call it "cognitions and cognitive images", or "concrete universal", "aesthetic distance", or "the meaning of texture and the meaning of structure"; Brooks can speak about "metaphor", "wit", "irony", "paradox" or "paraphrase"; and Empson can explore "seven types of ambiguity", the function of emotions and feelings, or just single words. But when it comes to the real practical analysis, all of them are actually exploring the meaning and symbolism of poetic imagery. All three critics share the same desire to discover the hidden meaning of the poetic images, and their only motivation as literary critics is to prove that a certain detail works or functions in the presupposed way which they have chosen in advance. This is the main reason why their theorizing sometimes gets in the way of their analyzing, or that they are forced to adjust their analyses according to their theoretical principles and beliefs. These discrepancies happen very often, but the conflicts and contradictions which occur in theory or in practical analysis are sometimes also the consequence of their efforts to reconcile disparate conceptions and doctrines. The New Criticism is the only modern movement which attempts to reconcile and put together two such divergent critical schools as textual criticism and referential criticism, thus combining two almost completely exclusive theories such as literature as knowledge and literature as an autonomous, aesthetic object. The conflicting nature of these two orientations is reflected in both the definitions of critical concepts, and in the application of theoretical concepts to the practical analysis of literary works.

Theoretically, Ransom, Brooks and Empson are so different that one might assume that there is nothing in common between them to discuss. Even looking at their teachers and the first inspiring models, one can see great differences. Ransom's ideals were T.S. Eliot, Plato, Wordsworth, Kant, Hegel, Croce, Bergson and the Pragmatists. Brooks went through a period of change, but his teachers were Ransom and Empson equally with T.S. Eliot and Richards, Aristotle, Coleridge, T.E. Hulme, and Imagism and Romanticism in general. Empson admires some of the principles of Richards, Shelley, Bloomfield's linguistics, E.A. Poe, Pound, French symbolism, Freud, and some minor semantic theoreticians. However, since these three critics are interrelated, exchanging the same ideas or writing about the same topics, these influences intermix and one cannot draw a strict line as to where they start or where they end. For instance, French symbolism and Freud are also very much present in Ransom's or Brooks' theorizing, and there are also some reflections of Freudian impact even in their analyses, but in Empson this influence is much stronger and evident. Similarly we can talk about Plato and Aristotle, Kant, Classicism and Romanticism, as well as about differences that the American Pragmatism or British form of the Neo-Hegelian version of pragmatism have brought to all these critics. Unfortunately, this was not part of the discussion conducted here, but we can definitely assume that Dewey's influence, which was very evident in Richards' writings, and also Bradley's influence, which was very evident in T.S. Eliot's writings, are the most important ones to be considered in future studies on this subject-matter. An echoing of Bradley's ideas is present in Ransom's theory of cognition, and Dewey's ideas of art as aesthetic experience are reflected in the writings of almost all the New Critics.

The fact of the matter is that we have found many of the conclusions of previous studies on Ransom, Brooks and Empson to be wrong, presumptuous or misleading. This is true equally for both positive and negative types of criticism. For instance, there is nothing more erroneous than the very common assumption that New Criticism equals a formalistic and aesthetic approach to literature, and that theoretically it depends very much on Neo-Kantian aesthetics. Partially, the credit for this misleading assumption should be given to the New Critics themselves, who started calling themselves "formalists" and accepted the echoing of Kant's aesthetics through two different sources: through Coleridge and English Romanticism as the reflection of German philosophy and literature, and through Richards, Croce, Bergson, Imagism, T.E. Hulme, T.S. Eliot, E. Pound and American Pragmatism. The aesthetic principles of prior sources had changed so much because of the multiplicity of the influences that there was nothing left that still resembled Kantian aesthetics. The only New Critics' principle that was left and still resembles its original roots is "literature as an autonomous, aesthetic object", but many besides Kant have said that. As regards the New Critics' analytical methods as "formalistic", this misleading terminology got in the way of a proper definition of the movement from the very beginning. Feeling that they were real revolutionaries and rebels against the academic establishment as are form and content. Therefore, the critic's responsibility is to recognize the significance of both. "This double quality of experiencing our own time to the full and yet being able to weigh it in relation to the other times is what the critic must strive for, if he is to be able to discern and demand the works of art that we need the most" (Matthiessen, p. 18). As did many critics at the time, Mattheissen warned the New Critics that they cannot stay in their ivory tower, and that the central responsibility and duty of critics is to widen their range of interests out of an "awareness of some of the world-wide struggles of our age". (Ibid.) In the New Critics' approach to literature, Mattheissen saw the potential danger of isolating the work of art from life, and he perceived the critic's goal in analyzing as analysis for the sake of another academic game. His distaste for Tate and Ransom is much stronger than for Brooks; his remarks are sometimes quite similar to those of A. Kazin, but Mattheissen's criticism is generally unbiased and to the point.

Murray Krieger belongs to the earlier group of authorities on New Criticism, but to those who were both sympathetic to and critical of its outcome. His book, The New Apologists for Poetry, (1956), is still considered as the most reliable and objective judgment about the movement and its major representatives. However, written in a traditional academic style, with obvious innovative ambitions to bring more than an insight into the subject matter, Krieger's book is sometimes too difficult to deal with, particularly because of the author's very specialized terminology (cf. the use of terms such as contextualism, linguistic aestheticism, etc.). Nevertheless, Krieger's account of to point out again the common characteristics in their theory and practice. For instance, Ransom does not believe in organic unity. Before 1955, he did not believe in the special status of metaphor, and he was always against the paraphrasing of the poem. However, his analyses have shown that he uses the same methods as Brooks and Empson in eliminating certain elements of the poem's structure in favor of others, looking for the key words which will bring out the presupposed alternatives to the meaning. Because he is not very certain about his attitude towards the function of feelings, thoughts and emotions, by accepting T.S. Eliot's approach he sometimes has the same attitude and speaks about their fusion or unity, or by rejecting Richards he has to reject the role of emotions and speaks about the conflicts and tensions between thoughts and feelings; in fact, Ransom's opinion on this subject varies from case to case, but in general he is always ready to replace this with his favorite remark that if the logic of the poem fails, the poem is not good. In other words, regardless of the fact that there are three different situations to speak about, in his practical analysis Ransom looks for the conflicting points between elements of the poem's structure. Using Richards, he also created three types of poetry based on the same principles of excluding and including the concept of idea.

Secondly, Brooks is definitely a proponent of Organicism and declares the organic unity and the whole as priority concepts in defining the poetic structure. However, he is also a defender of the concepts of irony and paradox; he is a supporter of contextual analysis, and he fully accepts Coleridge's teaching about the conflict between the two opposites, as well as Richards' teaching about inclusive and exclusive types of poetry. This means that in practice, Brooks is also using the same method of confronting the two elements with opposing meanings in order to create paradox or irony.

Obviously, Empson is not any exception for this rule, he was the one that started the whole movement. Empson's theory and practice imply that the role of the conflicting elements is a crucial point for any type of analysis. Ambiguity could not exist without disorder or discrepancies in the relationship between the reader and the text: within the text itself, on the one hand, and between the author and the text, or the author and the reader, on the other hand. The critic considers all possible meanings, but the meaning that he singles out must be equivalent to the contextual meaning, i.e., it must be verifiable by its context in one way or another.

Therefore, in conclusion we can say that New Criticism as practiced by these three critics is a special kind of textual criticism which in theory does not acknowledge the role of the reader, but in practice, definitely shows that the reader is of the utmost importance. This creates the major problem in defining the New Critics in terms of contextualism proper, but, on the other hand, it opens up the possibilities of seeing New Criticism as the rudimentary beginnings of modern contextual semantics, or as a form of the Continental aesthetics of reception. The parallel is maybe too new to be accepted without scrutiny, but some future and advanced studies in the history of ideas, philosophical sources and impacts might be the proper answer to this hypothesis, particularly when taking into account the impact that William Empson's breakthrough had on the traditional, one-dimensional understanding of the role of criticism. Starting with this as the initial premise, it is not so difficult to go a step further and connect Hans Robert Jauss' concept of "literature as provocation" with Empson's implicit message of "criticism as provocation".

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

[1] According to the ten traditionally most reliable books on New Criticism, the most frequently appearing names are R. Blackmur and J.C. Ransom. R.P. Warren is more often omitted than W. Empson, who is considered either as a predecessor or simply as a Britisher. K. Burke is more often included than is A. Tate. Surprisingly, some other critics are included, such as E. Wilson (three times), or Eliseo Vivas (twice), as well as the Chicago Critics. Sometimes Blackmur is excluded because of his interest in Freud and prose analysis. A broader list includes also the predecessors I.A. Richards and T.S. Eliot as well as the successors W. Wimsatt and P. Wheelwright, sometimes including even the Fugitives and Southern Agrarians. Cf. M. Zabel, *Literary Opinion in America* (1937, r. ed. 1968); A. Kazin, *On the Native Ground* (1942); R. Spiller, *A Literary History of the U.S.* (1949); W. Elton, *A Guide to the New Criticism* (1951, r. ed.); R.W. Stallman, *Critics and Essays in Criticism* (1949); J. Pritchard, *Criticism in America* (1956); R. West, *Essays in Modern Literary Criticism* (1952); W. O'Connor, *The Age of Criticism* (1956); W. Sutton, *Modern American Criticism* (1963); and J.L. Stewart, *The Burden of Time* (1965).

[2] W. Elton thinks that the New Critics only use the same type of vocabulary; the same opinion is shared as well by M. Krieger, L.T. Lemon and R. Foster. The most critical is Krieger who said that the movement lacked a "foundation of aesthetic theory" to be more than a divergent group of individuals: cf. his *The New Apologists for Poetry*, 1956. See also M. Krieger, "Creative Criticism: A Broader View of Symbolism" (*Sewanee Review*, Winter 1950); R. Foster, *The New Romantics* (1962); L.T. Lemon, *The Partial Critics* (1965), W.S. Knickerbocker, "Wam for Maw: Dogma Versus Discursiveness in Criticism" (*Sewanee Review*, October 1941); and Robert Wiemann, who uses the term "New Criticism" in a very loose sense, to describe any kind of contemporary textual criticism: cf. his *"New Criticism" und die Entwicklung bürgerlicher Literaturwissenschaft*, 1962.

[3] *Fugitive* (1922-25) and *Kenyon Review* (1939-59) founded and edited by Ransom; *Hound and Horn* (1927-1934) edited by Blackmur; *Southern Review* (1935-42) founded by Tate, edited also later by Brooks and R.P. Warren; and from 1944, in *Sewanee Review* the editors were several times Tate, Brooks or R.P. Warren.

[4] Reactionary activities involved several books, symposiums, and many public debates and campaigns. The worst were *I'll Take My Stand* (1930); *The Mind of the South* (1941) and the contributions in *Bookman* and *American Review*, two ultra-rightist periodicals which openly supported Nazism, (cf. A.E. Stone, "Seward Collins and the American Review: Experiment in Pro-Fascism, 1933-37", in *American Quarterly*, 1960, Nop. 1, pp. 4-19). Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot were also regular contributors.

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[5] The reactions varied from mild to very antagonistic. These started with Harry Levin's "Literature as an Institution" (*Accent*, 1946, No. 2, pp. 159/68) and Robert G. Davis, "The New Criticism and the Democratic Tradition", (*The American Scholar*, 1949-50, No. 1, pp. 9-19); and were continued by F.O. Matthiessen, *The Responsibilities of the Critic* (New York, 1952); W. Sutton, *Modern American Criticism* (q.v.); R.H. Pearce, "Historicism Once More" *Kenyon Review*, (Autumn 1958, pp. 554-91); again W. Sutton, "The Contextualist Dilemma - or Fallacy?", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (December 1958, pp. 219-29); H.H. Waggoner, "The Current Revolt against the New Criticism", *Criticism* (Summer 1959, pp. 211-225); and Mark Spilka, "The Necessary Stylist: A New Critical Revision", *Modern Fiction Studies* (Winter 1960-61, pp. 281-297).

[6] See the polemics between Rene Wellek and Gerald Graff: "The New Criticism Pro and Contra" by Wellek (*Critical Inquiry*, Summer, 1978, pp. 611-24); Graff's response "New Criticism Once More" (*Critical Inquiry*, Spring, 1979, pp. 569-75); and Wellek's reply "A Rejoinder to Gerald Graff" (same issue, pp. 576-79). The expression "crude and frankly reactionary formalism" is used by Bruce Franklin in his essay "The Teaching of Literature in the Highest Academies of the Empire", in Louis Kampf and Paul Lauter, *The Politics of Literature* (New York, 1973, p. 113). The same expression was used by George Watson, *The Literary Critics* (New York, 1963), p. 172. The following expressions are by R.S. Crane (critical monism), by Winters (obscurantism), and R. Foster (rhetoric of speculation, etc.). For more recent studies on New Criticism see G. Graff, *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society* (Chicago, 1979); A. Goldsmith, *American Literary Criticism: 1905-1965* (1979, III v.); and Lajos Nyiro, *Literature and Its Interpretation* (The Hague, Mouton, 1979).

[7] L. Nyiro, *Literature and Its Interpretation*, p. 123.

[8] Ibid., p. 126.

[9] Apart from Alick West, *Crisis and Criticism* (London, 1937), there was no serious attacks on the New Critics. How influential the New Critics were at the time, can be seen from the statement by Douglas Bush, who says: "No department of English could count itself respectable, unless it included at least one New Critic". Cf. *Literary History and Literary Criticism. Acta of the Ninth Congress of the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literature; New York 1963*, ed. Leon Edel (New York, 1965), p. 4.

[10] G. Graff, *Literature Against Itself*, (q.v.), p. 129.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Cf. Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Literary Criticism* (New York, 1971). See also M. Krieger, *The New Apologists for Poetry* (q.v.) and L.T. Lemon, *The Partial Critics* (q.v.).

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1] "A Poem Nearly Anonymous", *American Review* (May, 1933, vol. I), pp. 17-203; "Forms and Citizens", *AR* (September, 1933, vol. I), pp. 444-67; both reprinted in *The World's Body* (New York and London, 1938).

[2] "Flux and Blur in Contemporary Art", *Sewanee Review*, XXXVII (July, 1929), pp. 353-66.

[3] The discussion of the analytical aspects of the essay will follow separately, at the end of this chapter.

[4] *The World's Body* (New York and London, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938) pp. vii-xi; Loc. cit. viii. Hereafter, all references to this book will appear in the text under the abbreviation *WB*.

[5] L.T. Lemon, *The Partial Critics*, p. 38.

[6] T.S. Eliot, "Yeats", in *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber and Faber; 1957), p. 255.

[7] This definition applies only to "A Poem Nearly Anonymous" and to Ransom's concept of "aesthetic distance".

[8] Cf. Louis D. Rubin, "A Critic Almost Anonymous: John Crowe Ransom Goes North", in Thomas Daniel Young (ed.), *The New Criticism and After* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), pp. 1-22. According to Rubin, Ransom's analysis of Milton is sometimes far-fetched because it is more "Ransom *as* Milton or Ransom on Ransom" than a real analysis of Milton.

[9] One should not forget that *The New Criticism* was the only one of Ransom's books which was not a re-collection of previously published essays. Ransom indeed had printed parts of this book before, in different periodicals, as he did earlier, but he wrote these essays as parts of the book, i.e., for the first time, as a systematic survey of his theoretical views, according to his project and a contract signed in advance.

[10] They are: "Poetry: A Note on Ontology" (1934); "Criticism, Inc." (1937); "Criticism as Pure Speculation" (1941); and "Wanted: An Ontological Critic" (1941).

[11] As did many others, W. Empson was to openly oppose the autotelic status of literature later, when the movement was over, and when, under attack or for other reasons, everyone changed his opinion or no longer cared. He says: "No work of literature is a 'purely' aesthetic experience, divorced from any moral consideration". Cf. his "Correspondence on King Lear", *Critical Inquiry*, III (1961), p. 67. See also Brooks' new position in "Literary Criticism: Poet, Poem and

Reader", reprinted in Perspectives in Contemporary Criticism, ed. S.N. Grebstein (New York, 1968), 96-108. Even Ransom would soften in Poems and Essays (1955), and speak about the same problem, ignoring the autonomy of literature.

[12] Cf. "The Inorganic Muses", Kenyon Review, V (Spring, 1943), pp. 278-300; "Criticism as Pure Speculation", in R. West (ed.), Essays in Modern Literary Criticism (New York, 1952), pp. 228-46; "Criticism, Inc.", in The World's Body (q.v.), pp. 327-350; "Yvor Winters: The Logical Critic" and "Wanted: An Ontological Critic", both in The New Criticism (q.v.), pp. 211-275 and 279-336.

[13] This is the paraphrase of the most common thought that appears in almost all of Ransom's essays that are related to the discussion of poetic structure. See note above.

[14] Ransom's essay "Criticism as Pure Speculation" (1941) represents in a sense the outline of the book The New Criticism (1941); the same topic and the same examples occur in both. Naturally in the book they are much more elaborate and expanded.

[15] "Criticism as Pure Speculation", in The Intent of the Critic, ed. Donald Stauffer (Princeton, 1941), pp. 91-124. However, we are using the reprinted text in Essays in Modern Literary Criticism, ed. Ray B. West (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1952), pp. 228-46. Hereafter, all references will be in the text under the abbreviation "CPS".

[16] For definitions of "structure" and "texture" in The New Criticism see pp. 280, 268, 184, 174, as well as particular aspects pp. 326, 324, 260-61, 219 etc. Cf. also note 28 above.

[17] Ransom, The New Criticism (Norfolk: New Directions, 1941), p. 16. Hereafter all references to this book will appear in the text under the abbreviation NC.

[18] Ransom has a lot of good things to say about Winters, but he objects to his "moralistic illusion" and particularly to his constant preoccupations with the phonetic properties of the poem, meter, etc. He thinks that "the phonetic phrases in poetry are not more particularized than are the phrases in prose"; therefore, the critic should study the poetic strategy or texture, not the arguments or phonetic meanings of the poem. Cf. p. 268 et passim.

[19] Ransom's views on metaphor are not always the same. However, here he uses his old argument against the theory of four meanings of metaphorical discourse. In Poems and Essays, or in his polemics with Brooks in a series of articles published in Kenyon Review, Ransom was to favor the logical aspect of metaphor, but now not as a secondary but as a primary element of the texture, i.e., metaphor is no longer more a second poem within the poem. In The New Criticis, loc. cit., p. 46, pp. 50-51 et passim.

[20] Ransom is against the Coleridge-Richards version of creative imagination, because he is against an objective-subjective analogy of understanding of the world's reality. Loc. cit., pp. 73-80. We will talk about imagination once more in Ransom's discussion of creative process and interpretation.

[21] This thought is repeated in the discussion under the title "The Aesthetic Context", op. cit., p. 91, et passim. Ransom proposes five contexts of discussing poetry: (1) the physiological, (2) the psychological, (3) the biological-psychological, (4) the biological-logical, and (5) the aesthetic. The last seems to be the only legitimate one.

[22] Cf. Ransom calls him "a great formalist" in regard to his interest in structural analysis. See pp. 254, 259 et passim.

[23] According to W.S. Knickerbocker, there are fourteen different definitions of poetry in The New Criticism. (See footnote 2 for the reference in Notes to the Introduction.)

[24] Thomas Daniel Young, (ed.) The New Criticism and After (Charlottesville, 1976), p. xviii.

[25] See God Without Thunder: An Unorthodox Defense of Orthodoxy, (New York, 1930). The same idea is formulated several times differently: in God Without Thunder and in "Forms and Citizens", or elsewhere in The World's Body. Cf. a passage, for example, pp. 327-28 in God Without Thunder which speaks about religion as "a working definition to the relation of man to nature"; as "humane order", devoted to "man's welfare"; and the other which is not usable for man, (i.e. "alien" and "unintelligible"), as opposed to the discussion of "work-forms" and "play-forms" in "Forms and Citizens", p. 30. However, even earlier, in "Statement of Principles" which was published in I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition (1930, rpt. New York, 1968, pp. xix-27), Ransom says: "Art depends, in general, like religion, on a right attitude to nature; and in particular on a free and disinterested observation of nature that occurs only in leisure". (The underlining is ours.) Industry, economics and science with its technology destroy nature, because their goals are limited to partial, practical aims. This is Ransom's life-long motto.

[26] "Art and Mr. Santayana", first in Virginia Quarterly Review, XII (Summer 1937, pp. 420-36), then reprinted in The World's Body (1938), pp. 304-27. However, Ransom is mistaken in believing that the phrase "knowledge without desire" originated directly in Schopenhauer, particularly in regard to art as he understands it. Actually, Kant was the first to speak about the "beautiful without desire" (so-called the first moment of taste), and about unpracticality, unpurposeness, or no moral or logical requirements in the existence of art. Schopenhauer's adaptation of Kant's teachings should be known to Ransom.

[27] See footnote 2 for the reference.

[28] "Flux and Blur", p. 363. Quoted according to James E. Magner, John Crowe Ransom: Critical Principles and Preoccupations (The Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1971), loc. cit. pp. 38-39.

[29] "Flux and Blur", ibid., p. 39.

[30] For the discussion on images, G.E. Moore and the child's experiencing things, see "Poetry: A Note in Ontology"; for the discussion of Croce and the pre-adult stage of knowledge, see "The Tense of Poetry": both in The World's Body, loc. cit, 116, 128 and passim, and 256 et passim.

[31] Cf. "A Poem Nearly Anonymous", "The Poet as Woman", "Poetry: A Note in Ontology", "The Tense of Poetry", and so on.

[32] From Croce's article "Aesthetics" in Encyclopedia Britannica (pp. 256-66). However, see also the excellent discussion of Croce and Ransom in regard to Ransom's early essay "Flux and Blur in Contemporary Art", in J.E. Magner's study entitled John Crowe Ransom: Critical Principles and Preoccupations, pp. 17-41 et passim. All quotations from "Flux and Blur" are taken from this book, as well as some phrases of Croce's. It happens that we agree with most things that Magner has to say, but our objection is that he does not make obvious the reasons why Ransom would later prefer Bergson instead of Croce, as well as that he offers no explanation of Ransom's criticism of intuitionism.

[33] Paradoxically or not, most New Critics are very critical about Romanticism, and very fond of Classicism, but still they are not able to abandon the main principles of Romanticism. This was pointed out by several critical studies; cf. Murray Krieger, The New Apologists for Poetry (Minneapolis, 1956); Richard Foster, The New Romantics (Bloomington, 1962); and Lee T. Lemon, The Partial Critics (New York, 1965).

[34] Bergson praises arts and literature as being of a higher level of knowledge than science because intuitive knowledge is the only type of knowing things in their totality. T.E. Hulme's definition of poetry assumes that the poem is the perfect verbal equivalent of real objects; but he understands the role of the poet as "editor" rather than as creator, copyist or simple imitator of the real or the particular. The reason why Hulme insists on the editing role of the poet is that he believes that the process of thinking and the human mind operate on the principle of a selection, rather than on the principle of a collection of data. Ransom accepts both of these opinions, with emphasis on logic instead of on intuition. He would add also the Kantian principle of poetry as the representation of natural beauty which claims that the quality of the poem as imitation is higher than its original.

[35] The World's Body, pp. 196-97. Lee T. Lemon objects to this reasoning of Ransom's, saying that Ransom fails to understand the difference between real objects and artistic images, or objects appearing in the arts. See The Partial Critics, p. 99.

[36] "The Poet as Woman", The World's Body, pp. 76-111.

[37] Ibid., p. 101. Here Ransom also offers an explanation as to why he thinks so. He says that "to be intellectual" means "to be disciplined in technique and stocked with learning", which is "a great advantage" even for "fertilizing the pleasures of imagination".

[38] Ransom is definitely against Brooks' idea of organic unity, and since he accepts Hulme's position of "editing" or of selectivity among irrelevant things, he has to clarify the ambiguity about his critique of T.S. Eliot's concepts of the dissociation and association of sensibility which also speak about unity. Therefore, now Ransom speaks about "fusion" of relevancies, but insists that dualism still stays (The New Criticism, pp. 183-184). However, this is not clear enough to see how it could be different from Eliot's teaching of dissociation, against which Ransom started his discussion in the first place, because Eliot understands both dissociation or disunity of sensibility, and association or unity of sensibility as the same process of fusion, but one that is going in an opposite direction from the other. In other words, for Eliot dissociation is the process of elimination of irrelevant things coming to the poet's mind, and association is the process of collecting relevant things coming from the poet's mind. Ransom's critique concerns the end of the process; he claims that complete fusion or unity is impossible; but, at the same time, he says that this is the only unity which could be achieved by the method of concrete universalization.

[39] J.E. Magner, John Crowe Ransom, p. 35.

[40] In spite of the fact that there is no essay dedicated to the subject-matter of the "concrete universal" in The World's Body or The New Criticism, Ransom frequently discusses it in regard to the concept of ontology, i.e., the ontological nature of poetry and criticism. The first essays directly related to the topic appear in Poems and Essays (1955).

[41] See particularly "Poetry: A Note in Ontology" in The World's Body (pp. 111-143) and "Criticism as Pure Speculation" in The Intent of the Critic (pp. 91-124).

[42] Y. Winters in his essay "John Crowe Ransom or Thunder Without God", reprinted in In Defense of Reason (Denver, 1943), pp. 502-555; and J.E. Magner, John Crowe Ransom (q.v.), pp. 13-46.

[43] For the first time "The Concrete Universal: Observations on the Understanding of Poetry" was published as a two-part essay in Kenyon Review, XVI (1954) 554-64; and Kenyon Review, XVII (1955),

383-407; and then only the second part was reprinted in Poems and Essays (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 159-186. The first part of the essay refers to W. Wimsatt's discussion of the concrete universal in his book The Verbal Icon (1954); the second part, in addition to the polemics with Brooks, explains the new point of view that Ransom has now taken. In Beating the Bushes: Selected Essays 1941- 1970, (New York: New Direction Books, 1972), one finds the last essay entitled "The Concrete Universal", written in 1970.

[44] "The Inorganic Muses", Kenyon Review, V (Spring, 1943), pp. 278-300; "The Bases of Criticism", Sewanee Review, LII (Autumn, 1944), pp. 556-71, and particularly in "Poetry I: The Formal Analysis", Kenyon Review, IX (Summer, 1947), pp. 436-56; "Poetry II: The Final Cause", Kenyon Review, IX (Autumn, 1947), pp. 640-58.

[45] "Why Critics Don't Go Mad" (1952), reprinted in Poems and Essays, loc. cit., p. 157.

[46] This "fusion" is so relative that the process is reversed in the case of the reader; i.e., imagery presented by the poem "diffuses in the mind a multitude of sublime and restful feelings". Cf. Poems and Essays, p. 175-6, and see also footnote no. 71.

[47] "The Inorganic Muses", (q.v.), p. 292, et passim.

[48] The theme which started in "Poetry: A Note in Ontology" and "The Tense of Poetry" (both in The World's Body, loc. cit., p. 116 and 256), was to reappear again in "Poetry I: The Formal Analysis" (q.v., loc. cit., p. 441) was and in "Poetry II: The Final Cause" (q.v., loc. cit., p. 654).

[49] Op. cit., pp. 291-292.

[50] See I.A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (1925), chps. IV and XXI, and others.

[51] R.S. Crane, Critics and Criticism (Chicago, 1952), pp. 83-107.

[52] Since this important essay discusses many different topics, we had to separate the specific problems according to certain units of interest of areas of study regardless of the fact that this would interfere with the complexity of their interrelations, or that it might create a certain type of repetition. Since this thesis should deal primarily with critical concepts and methods, some minor repetitions are inevitable and less damaging than a lack of clarity or missing information.

[53] Cf. "Poetry: A Note on Ontology", op. cit., pp. 112-120. Loc. cit. 141.

[54] Ibid., pp. 120-128. Loc. cit., pp. 141 and 122.

[55] Ibid., pp. 128-142. In general, Ransom would call any poetry which is intellectual, "metaphysical poetry", or poetry "true to life".

[56] R.S. Crane, The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry (Toronto, 1953), p. 19.

[57] Cf. J.E. Magner, John Crowe Ransom, (q.v.), pp. 68-92.

[58] See Ransom's comments at the very beginning of the essay, "Criticism, Inc.", about moralistic, traditionalist and psychologistic critics.

[59] The New Criticism, pp. 53-54.

[60] P. 280. Also in The World's Body, p. 259 (second definition), and again in The New Criticism, 268.

[61] The World's Body, p. 158 (first definition); pp. 158 and 156, 157 (second definition); and pp. 235-236 (third definition).

[62] "A Poem Nearly Anonymous" (1934), (q.v.), pp. 1-28.

[63] Cf. C.A. Patrides (ed.), Milton's Lycidas: The Tradition and the Poem (New York, 1961).

[64] R.S. Crane finds in Ransom's principles a tendency towards a "monistic reduction of critical concepts" (Critics and Criticism, pp. 83-107); Paul de Man thinks that there is a conflict between Ransom's definitions of poetry and the critical concepts which he uses; G. Graff claims that his theory contradicts his practice; W. Elton believes that the major problems derive from confusing terminology, etc.

[65] See footnote 8, op. cit., p. 13.

[66] Ibid., p. 13.

[67] Ibid., p. 14.

[68] M.H. Abrams, "Five Types of Lycidas", in Milton's Lycidas, ed. C.A. Patrides (New York, 1961), p. 217, All the following quotations are from this essay.

[69] First printed in Southern Review, II (Spring, 1937), pp. 783-806. Reprinted in The World's Body.

[70] This idea is present throughout the whole of The World's Body whenever Ransom needs to emphasize his preference for "logic" as a basic principle in his doctrine of literature as knowledge. Unfortunately, in "The Poet as Woman" this turns sometimes into such terrifying definitions as "man is an intellectualized woman" (the meaning is

negative; Ransom wants to say: "woman is man minus intellect" rather than the opposite "man is woman [i.e., feelings] plus intellect"); "woman lives for love, i.e., all tender fixations upon natural objects of sense"; womanlike poetry lacks intellectual power because woman-poets are lacking in intellectual interest; "the innocent woman-mind is not flexible enough to be at ease with its intellectual attainments"; etc. Ransom's conservativism shows its obvious impact on his literary views; the inferiority of woman is only a part of it. Consequently, it is quite understandable why he tries so hard to prove that the only great poetry is a poetry written by the intellectual adult male.

[71] Most of the theoretical aspects of this essay have already been discussed in the context of other theoretical concepts presented in the other essays. Theoretically, there is nothing new in "The Poet as Woman"; as a matter of fact, most of the topics are much better explained elsewhere than here, excluding only Ransom's discussion on imagination and intellect.

[72] Ransom makes a distinction between "eclectic" (negative connotation) and "intellectual" (positive connotation) as two opposing and excluding concepts.

[73] Reprinted in The World's Body, pp. 233-261 and pp. 212-233.

[74] Op. cit., p. 216 et passim.

[75] Ibid., p. 250 et passim.

[76] Cf. The World's Body, pp. 233, 234-35 et passim. L.T. Lemon, The Partial Critics (q.v.), p. 102.

[77] Ransom, op. cit., p. 138. Lemon, op. cit., p. 103.

[78] The World's Body, pp. 215-216 and 219-220, et passim.

[79] C. Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn (New York: Harvest Books, 1947), pp. 215-253.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1] The origins of Brooks' terminology were discussed by several critics in the scope of other topics (M. Krieger and L. Lemon in regard to Richards and T.S. Eliot, R. Foster in regard to Romanticism, S. Hyman in regard to trends in criticism, etc.), but very rarely as a topic for its own sake. The only book that discusses in detail the New Critics' terminology as its only topic is W. Elton's Guide to the New Criticism, Chicago, 1951 (a revised and enlarged edition of the previous work entitled A Glossary of the New Criticism, 1949). For Brooks' personal remarks about the development of his theoretical concepts see the interview made by R.P. Warren, in The Possibilities of Order: Cleanth Brooks and his Work, ed. L.P. Simpson (Baton Rouge, 1976), pp. 1-125. See also, C. Moorman, "The Vocabulary of the New Criticism", American Quarterly, IX (1957), 180-184.

[2] The basis for my discussion on Organicism (besides the original theoretical works) is G.N. Giordano Orsini's article "Organicism", in: Dictionary of the History of Ideas, See also, G.N.G. Orsini, Organic Unity in Ancient and Later Poetics (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1975); G. McKenzie, Organic Unity in Coleridge (Berkeley, 1939); G.S. Rousseau, Organic Form (London, 1972); and M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York, 1953). A more general list would include minor articles in dictionaries and encyclopedias.

[3] The controversial problem of organic unity has been treated variously by authors of different periods. The ancient interpretations usually did not separate the problem of organic unity from the problem of inner form. For example, Plato in Phaedrus speaks about the funcationality of inner form as inseparable from its organic unity; Aristotle in his Poetics speaks about the form which functions as the unity, but rather as the unity of the whole than that of the elements within it. Modern aesthetics are more inclined to make a distinction between the two concepts, considering them as not only separated but as unrelated issues. For instance, Anglo-American scholars tend to emphasize the importance of organic unity, unlike German scholars who stress the importance of the inner form in defining Organicism (O. Walzel, H. Wolfflin, etc.). A modern version of Organicism, so called holism, goes so far that it completely ignores the issue of form as relevant to its teachings (speaking about the whole instead of unity or inner form). In our review we had to avoid all these controversies, mentioning only a few general versions of Organicism, ignoring theories apart from those in aesthetics. Also, it was inevitable to make a clear dividing line between those who oppose and those who accept the traditional approach, rather than to consider the differences between modern interpretations.

[4] Theatetus, 204B; Phaedrus, 259E-265C; and Philebus, 64B. The idea of the unity and the whole appears in Republic, 420D, and in Gorgias, 503E. Cf. Orsini.

[5] *Poetics*, chapters 18, 23 and 24. The idea of the organic unity in *chapter* 7, referring to Plot. The concept of the whole in *Politics*, I.2. 1253a 20; and in *Metaphysics*, ch. V. Cf. Orsini.

[6] Aristotle speaks only once about organic unity, *Poetics*, ch. 7; saying that the status of all parts is not equally important: action, i.e., plot is more important than characters or the other parts of a tragedy. Instead of the concept of unity, he rather speaks about the distinction between the "whole" and the "all".

[7] *Enneads*, I.vi., 1 50; c.f. Orsini.

[8] G.N.G. Orsini, "Organicism," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. P.P. Wiener, (New York, 1973), vol. III, p. 424.

[9] Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm von, *Monadology and the Other Philosophical Essays*; trans. P. Schrecker and A.M. Schrecker (Indianopolis, Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 11th print 1981, first ed. 1965), pp. 148-163.

[10] Cf. I. Kant, *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, trans. J.H. Bernard (London, Macmillan & Company, 1931). Cited from Orsini, p. 425 (in Kant, para. 66).

[11] Unfortunately Schelling is not translated into English adequately; (the main works still remain untranslated). The basis for my discussion is P. Edwards' *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols. (New York, 1967), see, particularly, 7, pp. 305-9, and 1, pp. 43 and passim. Apart from two studies which compare Wordsworth's and Coleridge's aesthetics to Schelling, there are no other studies of Schelling's influence on Anglo-American criticism and philosophy. In spite of the fact that even the British Hegelians Bradley, Taggart, Bosanquet and T.H. Green are definitely influenced at least by Schelling's theory of knowledge, as well as the Pragmatists (F.C.S. Schiller, W. James, J. Dewey, C.S. Peirce) by his teachings about imagination, beliefs, truth and reality; there is no more evidence of the direct influence of Schelling's works because of the lack of knowledge about the original text. We believe that future studies would definitely show that, even coming from secondary sources, this influence was very significant in shaping some of the most popular aesthetic and philosophical theories; in literature, particularly in the period of Romanticism and New Criticism, and in philosophy at the very beginning of the 20th century.

[12] B. Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistics*, trans. Douglas Ainslie, 2nd ed. (London, 1922; first ed. Houston, 1912), pp. 2, 20. Cf. Orsini.

[13] M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*. (Oxford, new ed., 1974; first ed. 1953); see also, by the same author, "Implications of an Organic Theory of Poetry", in *Literature and Belief, English Institute Essays, 1957* (New York, 1958), pp. 53-79.

[14] This is a very controversial issue. After Gordon McKenzie's *Organic Unity in Coleridge* (Berkeley, 1939), it was accepted that Coleridge's contribution to Organicism was in his introduction of the theory of opposites as the pretext for organic unity. In his article "Coleridge's Philosophy and Criticism" (*The English Romantic Poets: A Review of Research*, ed. T.M. Raysor, New York, 1950, pp. 109-139), Rene Wellek objects to this traditional opinion, claiming that Coleridge's Organicism should not be explained in terms of his theory of the polarity of opposites. Unlike the others, Wellek thinks that there is no basis for connecting these two theories, because the concept of exclusion of elements is contradictory to the concept of unity in the first place, and, secondly, the concept of opposites deals with matters of structure as such, not necessarily with the subject-matter of organic unity as such. However Wellek's argument becomes invalid when one goes back to the brothers Schlegel and Schelling, who originated the connection between Organicism and the concept of opposites. This was one of the most popular concepts in the Romanticism. For instance, Schelling explains his concept of the organic origin of the world, based on the principles of his philosophy of the opposition between the negative and the positive, combining Spinoza's materialistic, determinstic pantheism with Herder's and Goethe's vitalistic view of nature and G. Bruno's vitalistic pantheism. Speaking about Shakespeare, August Schlegel applies directly Schelling's views, claiming that the intensity and tensions in the play depend directly on the antagonistic forces introduced in the structure of tragedy in order to reflect different (opposite) ideas and philosophies. In his later texts, in *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven, Yale, 1963), but also in his *History of Criticism* (vol. 2; 1955), cf. chapters "Romanticism Re-examined" and "Romantic Age", Wellek discusses the German background of English Romanticism, but this time without polemical overtones about the contribution of Schelling's theories. We happen to share the same opinion as is expressed in G.N.G. Orsini's "Coleridge and Schlegel Reconsidered', *Comparative Literature*, 16 (1964, pp. 116-18); and in J. Benziger's "Organic Unity, Leibniz to Coleridge", *PMLA*, 66 (1951, pp. 24-48).

[15] Among more than twenty dictionaries and encyclopedias, we found only a few that discuss the term "Organicism". (Literary dictionaries prefer to be more specific, talking about "organic form" rather than Organicism itself). Paradoxically, even P. Edwards' *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York, 1967, 8 vols.) does not list anything on "organic theories" or "Organicism". Literary dictionaries such as Barnet's *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Boston, 1971, first ed. 1962), Beckson's *Literary Terms: A Dictionary* (1975), the first edition was entitled *A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms: A Dictionary* (New York, 1960); Scott's *Current Literary Terms: A Concise Dictionary of Their Origin and Use* (London, 1965); Shaw's *Dictionary of Literary Terms* (New York, 1972); Shipley's *Dictionary of World Literature* (rev. ed. a1972, first ed. 1953), etc., do not have anything listed. Recent or better known handbooks like Preminger's *Encyclopedia*, Holman's

Handbook, M.H. Abrams' Glossary of literary terms, and Bullock's Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought discuss either the term "Organicism" or "organic form", but without historical references, and mention only Romanticism, or the basic definition of organic form according to the modern interpretations. Standard or etymological linguistic dictionaries usually ignore the issue, or they have definitions like Webster's New World Dictionary (Second College Edition, 1974, the first ed. 1953 in twelve reprints): organic - "3. made up of systematically interrelated parts; organized . . . cf. Functional". That is, the distinction is made between "organic" and "functional", and the first listed meaning is usually: "having to do with a bodily organ" or "involving the basic makeup of a thing", "constitutional", (op. cit., p. 1002), which is either a biological or a medical explanation based on the quality (or the feature) of something of being "organic", but the metaphorical meaning is always being "organized".

[16] S.T. Coleridge, Biographica Literaria [1817], ed. J. Shawcross, 2 vols. (London, 1907), vol. 2, p. 56.

[17] W.K. Wimsatt, "Organic Form: Some Questions about a Metaphor", in G.S. Rousseau, ed., Organic Form: The Life of an Idea (London, 1972), p. 70. It seems to me that Wimsatt understands Organicism too literally, ignoring the historical aspects which definitely determine its concepts. Cf. footnote 15.

[18] C. Brooks, Modern Poetry and the Tradition, (Chapel Hill, 1939). Cf. "Metaphor and the Tradition", and "Wit and High Seriousness", pp. 1-18, and 18-39.

[19] The controversial issue of the New Critics' so called "formalism" is so misleading that there are scholars who compare New Criticism to Russian Formalism. Cf. E. Thompson, Russian Formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism: A Comparative Study (The Hague-Paris, 1971); and unpublished Ph.D. thesis "Juri Tynjanov and Cleanth Brooks: A Comparative Study in Russian Formalism and Anglo- American New Criticism", by Barbara Korpan Bundy (Ph.D. 1970, Indiana University). This seems to contradict the basic principles of New Criticism which are different from those of Russian Formalism: poetic language as an extension of ordinary language (the Russians teach that the poetic language is a distortion of the ordinary language); the search for and the analysis of the meaning (symbolical or metaphorical), emphasis on imagery, etc. The Russians start their criticism of the traditional approach by rejecting Potebnja's theory of images, as well as refusing to look for the meaning; differences in the concepts of "tradition", "history", "evolution", the role of truth and knowledge, etc. The terminology is not adequate, nor does the same connotation apply in both cases because the concepts are totally separate from each other, and describe completely different critical systems. In addition to this, the Russian Formalists have developed few entirely consistent theoretical doctrines, and in practice, generally, they did not step down from their earlier positions.

[20] C. Brooks, "My Credo: The Formalist Critic", Kenyon Review 13 (1951), pp. 72-81.

[21] C. Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry (New York, Harvest Books, 1947) pp. 67-80.

[22] Ibid., pp. 192-215. Hereafter, references to this book will be cited in the text under the abbreviation WWU.

[23] Kenneth Burke, "Formalist Criticism: Its Principles and Limits", in Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method (Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 480-507.

[24] Ibid., p. 496.

[25] K. Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Prentice Hall, 1945), p. 447.

[26] Cf. C. Brooks & R.P. Warren, Understanding Poetry (New York, 1938). Hereafter, references to this book will be cited in the text under the abbreviation "UP". Cf. also, C. Brooks, "The Poem as Organism: Modern Critical Procedure", English Institute Annual 1940 (New York, 1941), pp. 20-41; and C. Brooks, "Irony as a Principle of Structure", originally first published in M.D. Zabel's Literary Opinion in America (second, revised ed., New York, 1951), but later reprinted in W.J. Handy & M. Westbrook (eds.), Twentieth Century Criticism (New York, 1974). References to this essay will be cited according to the alst edition in 1974, pp. 59-70.

[27] C. Brooks, "The Poem as Organism" (q.v., pp. 30-31, 36, 37).

[28] As a pretext for the essay "Irony as a Principle of Structure", Brooks wrote a shorter outline "Irony and 'Ironic' Poetry", in College English, IX (1948), pp. 231-37.

[29] Cf. "Irony as a Principle of Structure", in Twentieth Century Criticism, p. 60.

[30] Cf. C. Brooks and R.P. Warren, "The Reading of Modern Poetry", American Review 8 (February 1937), pp. 435-449; An Approach to Literature, jointly with Jack Purser as the third author (New York: Appleton-Century Crafts, 1936; 1938; revised ed. 1943); Understanding Poetry (New York, 1938; rev. eds. 1950, 1963 and 1979; and 17 reprints).

[31] See W. Elton's Guide to the New Criticism, (q.v.). See also footnote 1.

[32] Modern Poetry and the Tradition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1939), pp. 1-18. Hereafter, all references to this book will appear in the text under the abbreviation MPT.

[33] Almost all essays in The Well Wrought Urn had been published before. However, they were not reprinted in the book in the same form as they appeared in reviews and magazines. The book has its own unity because the essays were specially selected, edited (i.e., appearing shortened and free from polemics, without unnecessary allusions and remarks addressed to the opponents), and theoretically clarified. Brooks was very careful and did not want any mistakes; and for these reasons, this book is more coherent than any other of his books.

[34] Twentieth Century Criticism (q.v.), p. 60.

[35] Ibid., pp. 62, 63 and passim. This type of thinking appears also in some other essays before "Irony as a Principle of Structure" was published. Cf. particularly essays such as "The Language of Paradox" in The Well Wrought Urn, pp. 3-22, and "Irony and 'Ironic' Poetry" in College English, IX (1948), pp. 231-237.

[36] Richards speaks about concepts of "inclusion" and "exclusion" in the scope of his context theory, which can be related to language or to poetry. Cf. The Foundations of Aesthetics, with C.K. Ogden and J. Wood (London, 1922); Principles of Criticism (New York, 1924); The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York, 1936).

[37] W. Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (London: Chato & Windus, 1968; first ed. 1935), p. 119.

[38] In spite of the fact that Brooks' contextualism derives from Richards' context theory, as M. Krieger points out in The New Apologists for Poetry (q.v.), there are some fundamental differences. One of them, probably the most significant one, is that Richards believes in the predeterminated meaning of words, regardless of a possible context (predeterminated meaning + interaction of the words = contextual meaning). On the contrary, according to Brooks, contextual meaning, through the interaction of the words, produces the final (i.e., determinated) meaning of the words. Empson's theory of ambiguity was a departure from Richards' context theory, propagating the idea of multiple meanings, which was accepted by Brooks and most New Critics.

[39] The Well Wrought Urn, pp. 190-191 (definition of the poem), and pp. 212-213 (definitions of "dramatization" and again of the poem as experience).

[40] M. Krieger, The New Apologists for Poetry, p. 139.

[41] Apart from Krieger's formulation of Brooks' criticism, the concept of "contextualism" was not generally accepted by other scholars. It seems that Krieger's definition was too specific and personal to be considered as a proper one, in spite of the obvious advantage that the term had in comparison with the others (formalism, aestheticism, intellectual criticism, etc.). My usage of the term

"contextual" criticism should be regarded as a reference to Brooks' methods of close reading and textual analysis of meaning, which rely exclusively on the contextual function of words.

[42] Cf. C. Brooks, "The New Criticism: a Brief for Defense", in American Scholar 13 (1944), pp. 285-295; reprinted in The Well Wrought Urn (1947), in revised edition as "The Motivation of Tennyson's Weeper", pp. 167-178.

[43] Darrel Abel, "Intellectual Criticism", in American Scholar 12 (1944), pp. 414-428.

[44] C. Brooks, "The New Criticism: A Brief for Defense", pp. 293-294.

[45] In his analysis of Tennyson, Brooks does not directly quote Richards, but in Modern Poetry and the Tradition (q.v.), and particularly in "Problem of Belief and Problem of Cognition" (The Well Wrought Urn, pp. 252-267), he points out very explicitly the connections between Richards' poetic theory and its application in his analyzing Tennyson.

[46] Cited according to J. Szili, "The New Criticism", in Literature and Its Interpretation, ed. Lajos Nyiro (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), pp. 113-163.

[47] Ibid., p. 152. In Principles of Literary Criticism (q.v.), see p. 250 and farther.

[48] Cf. R.S. Crane, "The Critical Monism of Cleanth Brooks", Modern Philology (May, 1948); reprinted with minor alterations in Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern (Chicago, 1952), pp. 83-108. Hereafter, all references to this essay will appear in the text under the abbreviation "Crane", and they will be cited from Critics and Criticism where the final text has been reprinted.

[49] Cf. Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn (q.v.). Hereafter, all references to the analysis of Wordsworth's Ode "Intimations" will appear in the text, and they are from chapter 7, entitled "Wordsworth and the Paradox of Imagination", pp. 124-151.

[50] See footnotes 18 and 23 for references.

[51] Burke's analysis of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" was published first in Accent (Autumn, 1943), a few months before Brooks had completed his essay. Brooks claims that he had not read Burke's article before he finished his own analysis. The comparison shows that the two texts are completely separate so that even if the authors knew of each other's analysis, they have deliberately avoided any cross-references and similarities. Both texts reflect the strong individual beliefs of the authors.

[52] Besides "The Reading of Modern Poetry", American Review 8 (February, 1937), pp. 435-49 (jointly with C. Brooks); Robert Penn Warren's two very important articles are: "Pure and Impure Poetry", Kenyon Review 5 (Spring, 1943), pp. 228-256; and "A Poem of Pure Imagination" (reprinted as "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", a long critical essay in the book on Coleridge), Kenyon Review 8 (Summer, 1946), pp. 391-427. The book The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Coleridge was printed a few months later, in New York (1946).

[53] Summarized statements from Crane's "The Critical Monism of Cleanth Brooks", in Critics and Criticism (q.v.), pp. 83-108.

[54] Cf. Herbert J. Muller, "The New Criticism in Poetry", Southern Review, 6 (Spring, 1941), pp. 811-39; Frederick A. Pottle, The Idiom of Poetry (Cornell University Press, 1942, rev. ed. 1946); and "The New Critics and Historical Method", Yale Review (Autumn, 1953); Alfred Kazin, On Native Ground (1942, rpt. Garden City, 1956); David Daiches, "The New Criticism", in The Time of Harvest, ed. R. Spiller (New York, 1962); and F.O. Matthiessen "The Responsibilities of the Critic", in The Responsibilities of the Critic (New York, 1952); M. Krieger, The New apologists for Poetry (1956, rev. ed. 1962). Brooks rejects the arguments of these critiques in "Criticism, History, and Critical Relativism", The Well Wrought Urn, (q.v.), pp. 215-252. Hereafter, all references to these opinions will be cited in the text under the name of the author, in addition to the page reference of that particular book or essay, already mentioned here.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1] William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930; fifth ed., Pelican Books, 1973). All reference to this book will be cited from the Pelican edition which includes revisions, corrections, and additional text from previous editions: Preface (1947 ed.) and "Note" (1961 ed.).

[2] Besides the writings of the New Criticis on Empson (Brooks, Burke, Ransom), and scholars like Richards, Daiches, Hyman, Olson and Krieger, there were several early studies of Empson such as M.C. Bradbrook, "The Criticism of William Empson", Scrutiny, 2 (1933), pp. 252-57; H. Mason, "W. Empson's Criticism", Scrutiny, 4 (1936), pp. 431-34; D. Hawkins, "Illuminated Texts", The London Mercury, 33 (1935-36), p. 447. The most hostile texts were written in the 1950's, the best texts in the late 1960's, and the largest number of writings are related to Empson's discussion of Milton. In the second edition of Seven Types of Ambiguity (1947) in the Introduction, Empson responded to some of his early critics.

[3] All following quotations of Shelley's theories are taken from his "A Defence of Poetry", printed in English Critical Essays: Nineteenth Century, ed. E.D. Jones (London: World's Classics, 1956), pp. 102-38.

[4] Cf. The Apology for Poetry by Sir Philip Sidney, ed. Mary R. Mohl, the Norwich Manuscript (Northridge: San Fernando Valley State College, 1969), p. 14; or a modern Canadian edition, Sir Philip Sidney, An Apologie for Poetrie: Un Plaidoyer pour la Poesie, with French transl. by M. Lebel (Quebec, Laval, 1965), p. 47.

[5] Cf. Leonard Bloomfield, Language (London, 1933). In spite of the fact that Bloomfield published his crucial book in 1933, his work and authority were known a few decades before. His dominant role in American linguistics before the 1950's was particularly significant in morphology and syntax from the point of view of behaviorism and so called "distributional structure". He studied the units of the sentence using the methods of distribution, substitution, bracketing and elimination; therefore, his structural linguistics is also called "descriptive", "distributional", "behavioristic", etc. The goal of Bloomfield's linguistics is to discover the logic of the human mind through the patterns of speech, which leads to the study of language as structural units. Contextual meaning, which varies according to the levels of distribution, is not a center of linguistic investigation; the main attention is directed towards the funcationality of "constituents", i.e. phonemes, morphemes, etc.

[6] The so-called Chomsky revolution started in the 1950's when Chomsky published his first works on "transformational grammar". Chomsky's two books on transformational syntax were a departure from Bloomfield in the direction of European linguistics, but closer to the

tradition of the Cambridge School of philosophers of logical positivism, and to the investigation of language from the point of view of logical symbolism.

[7] "The Best Policy" and "Timon's Dog" were published first in Life and Letters, no. 4 and 6 (Summer and Winter, 1936) and reprinted in William Empson's and George Garrett's Shakespeare Survey (London: Brendin Publishing Company, 1937), pp. 5-47. The two essays were revised in The Structure of Complex Words (London: Chatto & Windus, 1951), as "Honest in Othello", pp. 218-250; and "Timon's Dog", pp. 175-185. Hereafter, all references will be cited in the text under the appropriate title of the essay and from Shakespeare's Survey, if otherwise not specified. This edition is chosen for its clarity and emphasis on analytical aspects instead of theoretical.

[8] "The Best Policy" appears in its revised version in The Structure of Complex Words as the first, analytical part of the longer, four-part essay. The new essay "Honest in Othello" is no longer analytically oriented. Apart from the first part, the rest is a theoretical discussion of the play, and it is not relevant for the analysis of the word "honest". Thus, since minor corrections, few more examples and more detailed explanations did not basically improve or change the initial idea of the first version of "The Best Policy", it was quite natural to choose the simpler and clearer version of the essay for analysis. In other words, most references are going to be from "The Best Policy".

[9] Cited according to the second edition in The Structure of Complex Words (q.v.), pp. 176 and 177. The classification of four kinds of metaphors is only in this edition; the analytical examples are almost the same in all editions.

[10] Seven Types of Ambiguity (q.v.), pp. 19-20 and 21-22. Cf. also Chapter VIII for general definitions of meaning and statement. Basically, all of them have the same premise: the conflict of connotative and denotative elements creates ambiguity. (Hereafter, all references to this book will appear in the text under the abbreviation STA).

[11] C.J. Ogden and I.A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning (New York, 1923). Cf. chapters "Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages" by B. Malinowski, and "The Meaning of Meaning" by Richards.

[12] Elder Olson, "William Empson, Contemporary Criticism, and Poetic Diction", in Critics and Criticism (q.v.). Hereafter, the fifth edition is used (Chicago: Phoenix Books, 1970), and all quotations will appear in the text under "Olson".

[13] Cf. Kenneth Burke's analysis of Freudian concepts, in The Philosophy of Literary Form (3rd ed., London, 1973), pp. 270 et passim.

[14] Empson published "Emotions in Poems" in Kenyon Critics, ed. J.C. Ransom (Cleveland: World Publishing Comp., 1950?), pp. 127-137. The essay was revised and reprinted in The Structure of Complex Words (q.v.), as the first part of the larger essay "Feelings in Words", pp. 1-39.

[15] W. Empson also published "Words with Meaning", Japan Chronicle (23 Feb 1933); "Feelings in Words", Criterion (Jan 1936) and "Emotions in Words Again", Kenyon Review (Autumn, 1948). They became parts of other essays reprinted in The Structure of Complex Words (q.v.), pp. 1-39, 39-84, 250-270, etc.

[16] The Structure of Complex Words, p. 7.

[17] The Principles of Literary Criticism (1924) and The Meaning of Meaning (1922) are from the early period; Practical Criticism (1929) and Mencius on the Mind (1931) are the middle period. The more recent critical works are: Coleridge on Imagination (1934); The Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936), and Speculative Instruments (1955). Each period has its own characteristics and significance in the scope of Richards' theory.

[18] Basically, Empson is back to the discussion of the separation of thoughts and emotions which he did in Seven Types of Ambiguity, chps. I and VIII.

[19] Rosemond Tuve, Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery (Chicago, 1947). See also Helen Gardner's Business of Criticism (Oxford, 1959) and E.D. Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation (New Haven, 1967). Rosemond Tuve proved that certain assumed connotations in Empson's analysis of Herbert historically could not be true. The other two critics complained that Empson ignores the fact that the contemporary meaning of words is different from what it was in the past.

[20] Cf. William Righer, Logic and Criticism (London, 1963), pp. 100-107; Claes Schaar, "Old Texts and Ambiguity", English Studies 46 (1965), pp. 157-65.

[21] Some Versions of Pastoral (London: Chatto and Windus, 1935, 3rd rev. ed. 1968), p. 253. Hereafter, all references will be cited in the text from this edition under the abbreviation SVP.

[22] As with many others, this definition shows that Empson's pastoral means something other than the concept of the word used in the history of literary genres, (op. cit., p. 254).

[23] R. Tuve, "On Herbert's 'Sacrifice'", Kenyon Review, vol. 12, no. 1 (1950) pp. 51-57.

[24] W. Empson's reply to R. Tuve, "George Herbert and Miss Tuve", *Kenyon Review*, vol. 12, no. 4 (Autumn, 1950) pp. 735-8. Parts of the same arguments are included in "Note to Third Edition", in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London, 1953).

[25] E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, 1967), p. 62n.

[26] Ibid., p. 224n.

[27] Ibid., p. 8.

[28] E. Olson, "William Empson, Contemporary Criticism and Poetic Diction", first published in *Modern Philology*, 37 (1950) pp. 222-52. Reprinted in *Critics and Criticism*, ed. R.S. Crane (5th ed., Chicago: the Phoenix Books, 1970) pp. 24-62. Hereafter, all references will appear in the text under the name "Olson", and from the 5th edition.

[29] S.E. Hyman, *Armed Vision* (1948). Hyman is talking about the essays which will be included later in *The Structure of Complex Words*, not yet published at the time Hyman wrote the article.

[30] Cf. Roger Sale, "The Achievement of William Empson", *Hudson Review*, 19 (1966), pp. 369-390, revised and reprinted in *Modern Heroism: Essays on D.H. Lawrence, William Empson and J.R.R. Tolkien* (Los Angeles: Berkeley, 1973). See also Gerald Graff, *Poetic Statment and Critical Dogma* (1970) and *Literature Against Itself* (1979); and the polemics between Rene Wellek and G. Graff in *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 1978).

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